

Hitler's Third Reich – Issue 21

This page is to support the viewing of two-page within the .pdf viewer.

Originally published by Bright Star Publishing plc
Dalling Road, LONDON W6 0ES

Originally produced by Midsummer Books Ltd
Dalling Road, LONDON W6 0ES

This e-edition produced by
www.hitlersthirdreich.co.uk



Der Krieg und Frieden Show ²⁰¹¹

Die größte Militärfahrzeug
spektakulärsten der Reich

WWW.WARANDPEACESHOW.CO.UK
CONTACT US ON THE WAR AND PEACE DIRECT LINE
TEL 0044 (0)1304-813945 FAX 0044 (0)1304-812422
SEE US AT THE HOP FARM - PADDOCK WOOD, KENT TN12 6PY

© MEB

HITLER'S

Third Reich

Volume
21

Monthly

Witness the terrible secrets of Germany's evil empire

Hitler's Youth
A Generation Betrayed

Kovno Ghetto
Lithuanian Slaughterhouse

Hitler and the Reds
The Führer's Mortal Foes

House of Krupp
Hitler's Armourers

Aktion Reinhard
Genocide in Poland

£2.95 Monthly

ISSN 1464-1968



9 771464 196011

UK £2.95	South Africa R24.95
US \$3.25	Singapore \$7.95
Australia \$7.95	Malaysia Rg 11.95
New Zealand \$8.95	Malta Lm 1.95

HITLER'S Third Reich

Volume 21 Contents

- 1**
Secret Hitler Files
Hitler and the Reds
- 6**
Holocaust
Life and death in the Kovno Ghetto
- 12**
Inside the Third Reich
Hitler Jugend – a generation betrayed
- 18**
Nazi Horrors
Aktion Reinhard: Genocide in Poland
- 22**
Inside the Third Reich: Hitler's Henchmen
The House of Krupp
- 26**
Hitler's Battles 21
Dodecanese 1943: Slamming the back door
- 32**
Hitler's War Machine
Half-tracks
- 40**
Nazi Symbols
Foreign Legions
- 44**
A-to-Z of the Third Reich
'Renn' to 'Rust'

Publisher: Stan Morse
Editor: Chris Bishop
Deputy editor: Adam Warner
Art Director: Steve Horton
Illustrators: Peter Harper, Chris Bishop
Photography: David Tosh
Writers: Chris Bishop, Kurt Steiner, Adam Warner, William Wilson

<http://www.hitlersthirdreich.co.uk>

Our thanks to Ulric of England
(PO Box 55, Church Stretton, Shropshire SY6 6WR)
for allowing us to photograph items
from his extensive collection.

Picture acknowledgments

1-5: Aerospace Publishing; **6:** Association of Lithuanian Jews in Israel, Yivo Institute of Jewish Research, George Kadish/Beth Hatefutsoth via US Holocaust Memorial Museum (GK/BH), Lithuanian Photographic Archives, GK/BH (two); **7:** GK/BH (two); **8:** Zentralstelle des Landesjustizwaltungen Ludwigsburg, GK/BH (two); **10:** Yad Vashem, US Holocaust Memorial Museum (two); **11:** USHMM, Ghetto Fighter's House, Beth Hatefutsoth; **12-13:** Aerospace; **14:** Suddeutscher Verlag; **15:** Aerospace; **16:** Aerospace, Suddeutscher; **17:** Suddeutscher, Aerospace (two), EWWF/Aerospace; **18:** Popperfoto, Suddeutscher; **19:** Topham Picturepoint; **20:** Berlin Document Centre (three), Aerospace (three); **22:** Popperfoto; **23:** Topham; **24:** Aerospace; **25:** Aerospace (three), Topham; **26-31:** Aerospace; **32-39:** Aerospace; **40-43:** Aerospace; **44-45:** Aerospace, **46:** Aerospace (two), Suddeutscher; **47-48:** Aerospace.

Published monthly by
Bright Star Publishing plc
179, Dalling Road
London W6 0ES

Produced by Midsummer Books Ltd
179, Dalling Road
London W6 0ES
©2000 Midsummer Books Ltd

Colour reproduction by
Catalyst Publishing, Leamington Spa

Printed in Italy by Officine Grafiche De Agostini

This publication may not be reproduced in whole or in part in any form or by any means without the prior permission of Midsummer Books Ltd. All rights reserved. This publication may not be lent, resold, hired out or otherwise disposed of by way of trade at more than the recommended selling price shown on the cover, or in a mutilated condition.

UK and EIRE

Collect your copies of *Hitler's Third Reich* by placing a regular order with your newsagent today

Subscriptions

For information on how to take out a subscription, call Woodgate Fulfillment on 08707 270207 or visit our Web site at <http://www.hitlersthirdreich.co.uk>

Back Numbers

You can order back numbers from your newsagent, or by writing to:
Woodgate Fulfillment
PO Box 130
Hastings
Sussex
TN35 4ZD

Each volume costs £2.95 Sterling (Ir£3.25)
Each volume including video series costs £5.95 Sterling (Ir£6.75)

Credit card orders can be made by phone on 08707 270207

For wholesale trade distribution please contact COMAG Magazine Marketing on 01895 444055

OVERSEAS MARKETS

Subscriptions (Australia & South Africa)

Australia: Contact: Midsummer Books Subscriptions (Dept.H), PO Box 460, EASTERN MC VIC 3110. Telephone: (03) 9872 4000. Fax: (03) 9872 5454. E-mail: bissett@bissettmags.com.au

South Africa: Contact: Midsummer Books Subscriptions (Dept.H), Private Bag 10, Centurion, 0046. Telephone: (011) 652 1835. Fax: (011) 314 2984. E-mail: subscribe@jacklin.co.za

Back numbers (Australia & NZ & South Africa)

You can order your back numbers from your local newsagent, or by writing to one of the following addresses:

Australia: Midsummer Books Back Numbers (Dept.H), Gordon & Gotch Ltd, Private Bag 290, Burwood, VIC 3125. Telephone: (03) 9805 1887. Please enclose payment of cover price, plus \$ 1.65 (incl. GST) per issue postage & handling. Cheques should be made payable to Gordon & Gotch Ltd.

New Zealand: Midsummer Books (Dept.H), Gordon & Gotch (NZ) Ltd, P.O. Box 584, Auckland. Telephone: 09 625 3018. Please enclose payment of cover price, plus \$ 1.50 per issue postage & handling. Cheques should be made payable to Gordon & Gotch Ltd.

South Africa: Midsummer Books (Dept.H), Private Bag 10, Centurion, 0046. Telephone: (011) 652 1835. Fax: (011) 314 2984. E-mail: service@jacklin.co.za (please make cheques payable to Midsummer Subscription Services)

ISSN 1464-1976 (with video)
ISSN 1464-1968 (without video)

SECRET HITLER FILES

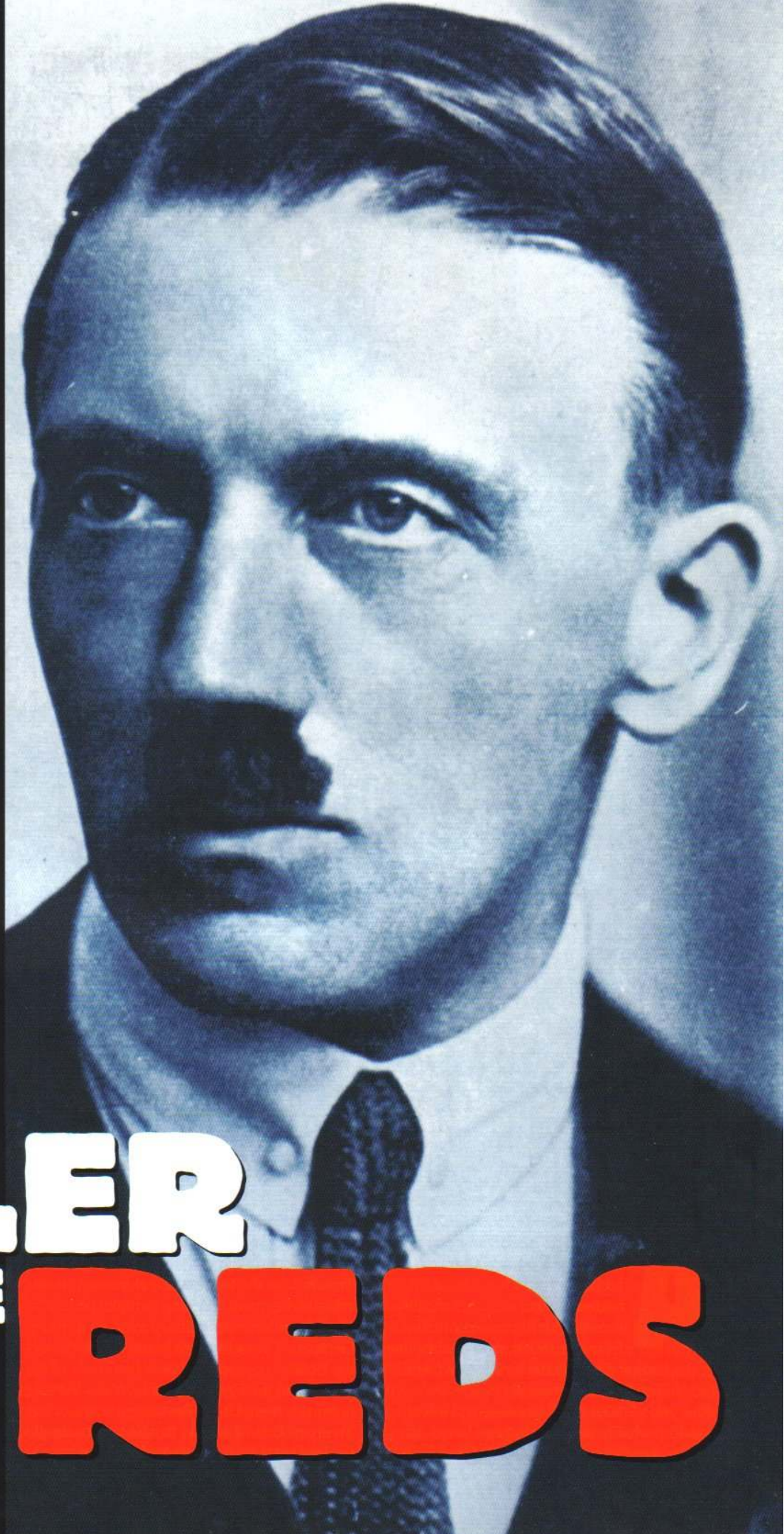


Hitler hated Marxism long before he became an overt Jew-hater – though as he grew older he considered them one and the same thing. In fact, his loathing of Communism dated back to his days as a homeless hostel dweller in Vienna.



HITLER AND THE REDS

Hitler claimed that his hatred for Socialism dated back to his days on a building site in Vienna, when he refused to join a trade union. His strong nationalist beliefs meant that anything which diminished the importance of the race, such as the internationalism espoused by Russian revolutionaries like Lenin, were anathema.





Left: The prospect of a successful Communist revolution seemed very real for a time after Germany's defeat in World War I. The biggest threat was seen to come from the east, from Lenin and the Bolsheviks in Russia. The right-wing Freikorps movement came into being to protect Germany's borders from such an attack.

But when Germany's armies collapsed at the end of 1918, soldiers returned home waving red flags. The fleet mutinied. The Communist risings were swiftly crushed, but the fear of a German Bolshevik revolution remained, stoked by extremists on both sides. The Communists believed they had nearly succeeded and it suited the German right-wing to agree. Without a Communist threat, who needed Fascists?

COMMUNISTS AGAINST ALL

The German Communist Party, the KPD, made no secret of its desire to smash 'the system.' The key constituent elements of that system – the middle classes, the army, industrialists, the church – welcomed any leader opposed to Bolshevism. The conservative establishment chose to overlook the more odious aspects of the Nazi party because it was the most effective antidote to the Bolshevik menace. Additionally, Hitler was the only right-wing leader with the ability to mobilise working class support against the left-wing parties.

Hitler first encountered Communist politics when he went to Vienna, describing this "horrifying" experience in *Mein Kampf*. Industrial workers – Germans as well as Czechs – were united in their rejection of capitalism and, in fact, everything else he held dear. "There was nothing they would not drag into the mud... the nation, because it was held to be an invention of the capitalist classes; the Fatherland, because it was seen as an instrument in the

hands of the bourgeoisie for exploiting the working class; the authority of law, because that was a means of repressing the workers; religion as a means of doping the people, so as to exploit them afterwards; morality, as a sign of stupid sheep-like docility." These were the tenets of Marxist revolution, and they appalled the young German patriot.

Hitler's personal background contributed to his reaction. In *Mein Kampf* he identifies the latent fear of the lower middle class,

ADOLF HITLER'S visceral hatred of Bolshevism was the foundation of his political outlook. It became inextricably linked with his anti-Semitism: from the 1920s until his last days in the bunker beneath Berlin he railed against the 'Judeo-Bolshevik world conspiracy.' And yet, without the Communists, Hitler would probably never have been heard of.

The formative years of the Weimar

Republic were haunted by the spectre of Bolshevism. In the winter of 1917-18, Leon Trotsky was the Bolshevik's chief negotiator with the Germans, seeking to make peace. He did not have the military strength to resist Germany's voracious territorial demands, so the Bolsheviks appealed over the heads of the generals to the German people. It availed them nothing – then. Under the savage terms of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, Russia was compelled to sign away great swathes of territory.



especially those members recently arrived on the lower rungs of the class ladder. Proletarian revolution threatened everything they had worked for. Hitler describes how the coarseness of the working class repels because it reminds the newly prosperous of their own origins – and to what they might regress should their fortunes wane.

MIDDLE-CLASS REACTION

For every wealthy socialist who adopts a political stance in favour of the working man, there are many more children of working men content to pull the ladder up behind them. The lower middle classes suffered worst of all during the post-war depression, their hard-won savings wiped out in the great inflation. They were Hitler's audience.

Hitler later exaggerated the extent to which his 'world view' came to him while in Vienna. His hostility to Jews was no more than that typical of pre-war middle Europe. It is only after the First World War that his writings and speeches become dominated by venomous anti-Semitism. But it did not take him long to establish a link between what he came to regard as twin evils. Marx was a Jew. Ergo Marxism was a Jewish doctrine.

By the time he wrote *Mein Kampf* he had concluded that the internationalism of the communist movement, its antipathy to the Fatherland, its appeal that transcended national (and racial) boundaries, was a Jewish plot. "Fate," Hitler wrote, "answered the question for me, as it led me to make a detached and thorough inquiry into Marxism and the activities of the Jews in connection with it. The Jewish doctrine of Marxism rejects the aristocratic principles of Nature and replaces the eternal privilege of vigour and strength by the dead weight of numerical mass. Thus it denies the individual worth of the human personality, impugns the teaching that nationality and race have primary significance, and thus removes the foundations of human existence and civilization. If Marxist doctrine were to be accepted as the basis of the universe, it would lead to the disappearance of all order."

RACE WAR VERSUS CLASS WAR

For Hitler, history was the struggle of race against race; class warfare was not a concept he accepted. German labourers and factory workers were still Germans, racially superior to Slavs or Jews – but they were being led astray. The culprit was both an internal and external enemy: the Jews and Communist activists within and, from 1918, the Bolshevik regime in Russia.

Hitler was not alone in regarding the victorious Bolshevik leadership as a Jewish

cabal. He never addressed the contradiction that this same leadership blamed 'international Jewish capital' for the same sort of fantasy conspiracies as he did. Lenin himself recognised that the disproportionate quantity of Jews in senior positions left the Bolsheviks exposed to traditional Russian prejudice. The White armies were often violently anti-Semitic, doing to defenceless Jews what they lacked the courage and organisation to do to the Reds. Hideous pogroms took place as the Ural and Don

Cossacks swept through the Ukraine in 1919.

Marxist leaders believed that the revolution was inevitable, that history was on their side. Yet even Lenin, living in comfortable exile in Switzerland before the war, had admitted that he did not believe it would happen in his lifetime. Nor did any Marxist imagine it would occur in Russia, the least industrialised major power. They expected the proletarian revolt to begin in the great factory complexes of the Ruhr or the 'satanic mills' of the British Midlands.

THE BOLSHEVIK THREAT



Above: 'Protection Troops' of the Soldier's Council are seen on the streets of Berlin on 10 November 1918. The Kaiser had abdicated the previous day, power had been handed to Socialist Friedrich Ebert, and the next day would see Germany signing the Armistice to bring World War I to an end.

Below: A meeting of the Spartacus League. Formed out of the revolutionary wing of the Social Democrats, the Spartacists had called for armed revolution during the war, and now called for the overthrow of the Ebert government. In January 1919 a Spartacist rising was crushed by the Army and Freikorps.





Above: The right wing reaction to the 'Red' threat of was to take up arms in defence of the nation. Because Hitler offered resistance to the Communists, he gained support from both the unemployed of the working class and the middle classes whose income was dwindling because of economic uncertainty.

Below: The Führer addresses the party faithful at a rally in the late 1920s. At this time, the Communist threat was seen as the main enemy, and the Stormtroopers of the SA often clashed violently with Socialist paramilitaries.



Lenin's call for world revolution in the wake of his coup d'état was a shrill cry for help, rather than a roar of menace. Unless the Russian revolution triggered sympathetic detonations across the world, he feared the forces of reaction would overwhelm it. Luckily for him, the Kaiser's generals decided to leave him in place because they knew Lenin would accept peace at any price. He had to, in order to fight off the White Russians.

INTERNATIONAL THREAT

Lenin's Bolshevik government survived its perilous birth, and the new regime continued to preach to the workers of the world. It provided more than intellectual support, sending expert agitators to assist their comrades abroad and money to those liberal politicians sympathetic to their cause – 'useful idiots' was Lenin's cynical description. Unfortunately for the German Communists, the second largest Communist party outside the USSR, their loyalty to Moscow handicapped their three-way fight against the Nazis and the Social Democrats.

To the doctrinaire Marxists running the Communist International, socialist parliamentary parties were stooges of the capitalist system, and were just as bad as the conservatives. Stalin decreed that there could be no co-operation with organisations he labelled 'social Fascists'. The left-wing vote remained split between the SPD and KPD, with catastrophic results at the polls. In July 1932 the Nazis polled 13.7 million votes; the combined SPD and KPD vote totalled 13.2 million. The left gained ground in the next election four months later, attracting

13.2 million votes again against the diminished Nazi vote of 11.7 million.

In the final election of 1933 the KPD deputies were forced to go into hiding – those that survived the SA dragnet. Without their presence in the Reichstag, the Nazis could assemble the 51% majority they required. The Marxist view that the Nazis were a passing phase, a last throw by the doomed capitalist system was poor comfort to those dragged away to concentration camps.

Given their prior record of mutual denunciation, the Nazi-Soviet Pact took Hitler and Stalin's closest supporters by surprise – let alone the international community. How could Hitler agree to a deal with the Bolsheviks? The truth was, he could do it easily, because he had no intention of keeping his word, any more than Stalin did. Hitler had stunned his own supporters before, by his non-aggression pact with Marshal Pilsudski. Making peace with Poland had been the last thing the Nazis, or Germany, expected the Führer to do once in charge of foreign policy.

SUPPING WITH THE DEVIL

Hitler did not let his pathological hatred of international Marxism cloud his political judgement: this cynical treaty isolated Britain and France and would enable him to deal with one set of enemies at a time.

Once the mask was off, in June 1941, Hitler's true aims were revealed. Bolshevism was to be exterminated. Communist party officials and Red Army Commissars were shot out of hand; Leningrad, the 'cradle of Bolshevism,' was to be destroyed. Moscow was to be razed to the ground.



Red Fighters



Left: The stunning success of the revolutionaries in Russia came as a severe shock to the governments of Europe. Never mind that the structure of Imperial Russia was backward and rotten to the core: the people had risen up and overthrown an all-powerful monarch. Their fear was heightened by the Bolshevik intent to spread the revolution all over Europe.

Below: Founded in 1914 by Karl Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg and others, the revolutionary wing of the Social Democratic Party became known as the Internationale Group in 1916. In 1917 it split from the SPD and was renamed the Spartacus League, after the leader of the largest slave revolt against the Roman Empire. In January 1919 the Spartacus League became the Communist Party of Germany.



Above: Dockworker Ernst Thälmann became chairman of the Hamburg Communists in 1921, and national chairman of the KPD in 1925. Had he been able to work with the SPD, then a left-wing alliance would have been the largest party in the Reichstag in 1932. Fortunately for Hitler, Thälmann stuck close to the Moscow line. He used Stalin's words to describe ordinary Socialists as 'Social fascists,' considering the democratic left almost as much an enemy as the Nazis.



VIOLENCE IN THE STREETS between uniformed private armies was a fact of German political life in the 1920s and 1930s. Hitler's Stormtroopers were among the first to be formed, but they were far from being alone. Other right-wing or veterans groups included the *Stahlhelm* and the *Reichsflagge*, while the Social Democrats and the Weimar Republic were supported by the *Reichsbanner 'Schwarz-Rot-Gold'*. At its height in the early 1930s the *Reichsbanner* had more than three million members. Its paramilitary wing, the *Schufo* (*Schutz Formation* or defence formation) was the direct equivalent of the SA. The *Schufo* could call on as many as 400,000 fighters. In the political fighting of 1932 several were killed, and thousands were arrested.

But long before the *Reichsbanner* had grown to such a size, the *Roter Frontkämpferbund* or Red Frontline Fighter's League had taken on the Stormtroopers. Founded by the KPD in 1924, the RFB had 25,000 members in 1925 and its strength had grown to more than 100,000 by 1928.

Ernst Thälmann led the RFB from 1925, and he used the organisation in much the same way that Hitler used the SA. The RFB was used for propaganda purposes as a parade group, but its other function was to provide the iron fist in street fights with political opponents. After a particularly bloody riot in 1928 the RFB was banned, and its remains were destroyed by the Nazis in 1933.



Jews have always played a big part in the life of the old Baltic city of Kovno. Before the war, they could have had no inkling of the horrors to follow as young Zionists went on summer camps (above) or studied in the Rabbinical schools of the Yeshiva (right). The German occupation brought all that to an end. In spite of being given some measure of self-government, organised by the Altestenrat (below left), the Jews of Kovno found themselves penned up in a Ghetto, secured behind barbed wire like cattle (below right). Order in the Ghetto was maintained by the Jewish police (left), but the ultimate power of life and death was held by the Nazis and their Lithuanian collaborators. Any signs of resistance or disobedience were dealt with harshly (right). Even so, Kovno was the home of a strong resistance movement.



KOVNO GHETTO





Kovno burns as Field Marshal von Leeb's Army Group smashes its way into the Baltic states. Kovno, or Kaunas in German, was only 100km from Lithuania's border with East Prussia, and the Germans captured the city on 24 June, only two days after the launch of Operation Barbarossa.

The German invasion of Lithuania was quickly followed by the massacre of most of the country's Jews. But in the Kovno Ghetto, used as a Nazi slave labour pool, life went on – after a fashion.

IN ANOTHER TIME and place, it would have been an interesting piece of military archaeology. A massive fortress, one of several built by the Tsars during the 19th Century around the Lithuanian city of Kovno, it had long been outmoded by the rapid development of 20th Century warfare. But in the early 1940s, Kovno's Ninth Fort took on a new and sinister purpose. Used by the Gestapo as a prison after the German capture of the Baltic republics, the fort became a killing centre for Kovno's Jews. More than 50,000 were slaughtered there, mostly in the first year of occupation.

Lithuania, the southernmost of the three Baltic republics, has had a significant Jewish population for at least five centuries. Kovno, or Kaunas, was

the largest city in the country, and since the 17th Century had a reputation as a major centre of Jewish culture. Strongly Zionist, it had a comprehensive network of Hebrew schools, and the largely Jewish suburb of Slobodka (Vilijampole in Lithuanian) was the site of an important *Yeshiva*, or centre of Talmudic study.

LITHUANIA'S JEWS

For most of its history, Lithuania has been dominated either by Poland or by Russia. However, it became an independent state at the end of World War I. By this time, there were 150,000 Jews in the country. About 40,000 of these were located in Kovno, the capital of the new state, making up a quarter of the city's population. However, the strongly anti-Semitic nature of the new state forced more than

Below: The retreat of the Red Army, which had occupied the country the previous year, meant that the German invaders were welcomed as liberators by Lithuanian nationalists. It would be some time before they realised that they had simply changed one master for another.



THE HOLOCAUST



Above: Lithuanians began killing Jews before the Germans arrived. Dozens were bludgeoned to death in the Lietukis Garage; hundreds more were killed around the old Jewish quarter of Slobodka.



Above: The Ghetto bakery prepares the meagre ration allowed to the inhabitants by the Germans. Food was in short supply from the start, and had to be supplemented by smuggling.

Below: Supervised by Lithuanian militiamen, Jews build their own prison. The fence was built to German specifications: two metres high, 20cm between horizontal wires, with vertical wires every metre.



20,000 Jews to emigrate from Lithuania between the wars. Jews did not serve in government or civil, service posts, nor could they attend universities.

Lithuania was declared to be in the Soviet sphere of influence in the secret clauses of the non-aggression pact signed between Germany and the USSR in August 1939. When the Soviets occupied Eastern Poland, they returned the city of Vilna (Vilnius) to Lithuanian control. The return of Vilna and the areas around meant that the Jewish population of Lithuania, swollen by refugees, jumped to more than 250,000.

SOVIET OCCUPATION

The Soviets occupied the country and officially annexed it in June 1940. This did nothing to lessen Lithuanian anti-Semitism, which was part of a general current of anti-Jewish feeling in Eastern Europe. Rightly or wrongly, the Soviet occupation was seen as being Jewish inspired, and some Lithuanian nationalist groups (which had strong links with the Nazis) agitated against them. Most prominent of the Jew-hating organisations was the Lietuviu Aktyvistu Frontas, or Lithuanian Action Front.

On 22 June 1941, the massed forces of the Wehrmacht

launched Operation Barbarossa, the invasion of the Soviet Union. Army Group North, under the command of Field Marshal Wilhelm Ritter von Leeb, attacked out of East Prussia, and German spearheads had reached Kovno within three days.

Even before they arrived, Lithuanian nationalists, who welcomed the German attack as a means of ousting the Russians, launched anti-Jewish pogroms all over the country. Thousands of Jews tried to flee the country, seeking the dubious safety of the interior of the USSR. But tens of thousands stayed.

In Kovno, anti-Semitic mobs rampaged through the streets of Slobodka. Several hundred Jews were killed in the streets – and the killing continued after the Germans arrived on 25 June. It is estimated that 10,000 died at the hands of Lithuanians and German murder squads before the Germans sealed off the ghetto in August.

MURDER SQUADS

Einsatzkommando 3 of *Einsatzgruppe A* swung into murderous action at the beginning of July, and by the end of August virtually every Jew who lived outside Lithuania's cities had been murdered. It is estimated that in just over eight weeks the total Jewish population of Lithuania had fallen from more than 200,000 to less than 50,000, about 30,000 of whom were in Kovno.

Much to the disappointment of the Lithuanian nationalists, they had simply exchanged one master for another. Instead of being rewarded with independence for their support, they found themselves being incorporated into

Reichskommissariat Ost.

The Germans quickly established a civilian administration in Kovno, under SA *Brigadeführer* Hans Kramer. Its first actions were to enact a series of decrees ordering Jews to wear armbands, forbidding them to work in certain jobs and keeping them from entering

Fort VIII

To Fort IX

KOVNO

THE GHETTO

TO
FORT VII
→

Hiding place for
illegal books

Weapons training

Secret armoury

Police Station

Ghetto
Gate

Secret
Meeting
Point

Ghetto
Workshops

Weapons
training

Clandestine
School

Hospital

Pharmacy

Fire Station

Altestenrat

Safe
House

Safe
House

Ghetto
Gate

LARGE
GHETTO

SMALL
GHETTO

Footbridge

Young
Zionists

Fire Station

Labour Office

Ghetto
Gate

Main
Gate

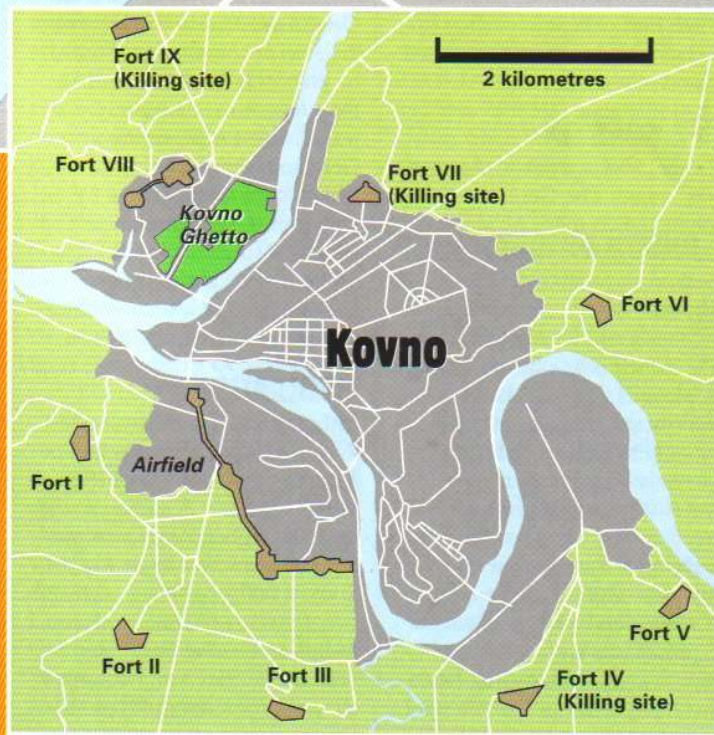
KOVNO
OLD
TOWN

THE GERMANS OCCUPIED Kovno on 24 June 1941, but it was not until 10 July that they announced the establishment of the Kovno ghetto. Influential members of the Jewish community asked that it be set up in the centre of the city, where most of Kovno's Jews lived, but the Germans decided on the old Jewish quarter of Slobodka. The area was poor, and the small wooden houses lacked adequate drainage for the numbers forced to move there.

The Jews of Kovno were given a month in which to move to the new ghetto, which would be closed off on 15 August. And closed was the operative word. The original medieval ghettos were simply areas in which Jews lived, though they were free to travel and do business elsewhere. In the Nazi version, the 30,000 Jews of Kovno not only lived in the ghetto, but were barred from leaving on pain of death (unless they were part of an escorted labour gang).

The Kovno ghetto was divided into two parts, the 'Small ghetto' being separated from the 'Large ghetto' by Paneriu Street. The only link was via a wooden footbridge. The two sections of the ghetto were sealed off by barbed wire, watched over by Lithuanian guards in a series of watchtowers. German police units oversaw the Lithuanians manning the ghetto gates.

The Small ghetto was liquidated on 4 October 1941, 1,800 people deemed unfit for work being killed at the Ninth Fort. The Large ghetto continued for another two years before finally being liquidated in the Autumn of 1943. It was then converted to a concentration camp, before finally being closed down in July 1944.



HITLER'S THIRD REICH 9

certain parts of the city. A ghetto was marked out in Slobodka, and Jews were given four weeks to move into the area assigned.

KILLING GROUNDS

The Germans continued killing Jews in September and October 1941. Over three thousand men, women and children died in that period. Most were taken to one of the series of 19th century forts that ringed the city, where they were often beaten before being shot.

On 4 October 1941, the Germans decided to eliminate the small Ghetto. Fit men and women were transferred to the large ghetto. Some 1,800 were judged unfit to work – the young, the sick, the old, women with children. They were taken to the Ninth Fort to the north of the city and shot.

Just over three weeks later, on 28 October, the inhabitants of the ghetto were summoned to Demokratu Square, where SA *Hauptsturmführer* Fritz Jordan carried out a mass 'selection'. By evening, 9,200 men women and children – about a third of the ghetto's population – had been deemed unfit to work. The next day, they were marched to the Ninth Fort, where in batches of 300 they were stripped, shot and buried in mass graves.

LIFE GOES ON

For the next two years, the ghetto was 'quiet'. The Germans conducted no more *Aktionen*, surviving ghetto dwellers being used on slave labour projects. About 2,000 were used on military projects outside the Ghetto, while another 5,000 were employed in the ghetto workshops. No wages were paid: the only reward for their labour was food – and not very much of that. To keep body and soul together the ghetto dwellers had to smuggle food in from the outside, using hoarded supplies of money and other possessions to pay. It was a great risk – anyone caught smuggling food was likely to be shot on the spot.

The ghetto was largely self-



Above: A pen-and-ink sketch by Jacob Lifschitz, drawn in 1941, depicts the City Brigades Office. It was here, in one of the departments overseen by the Altestenrat, that members of the labour brigades used outside the ghetto were selected.



Right: A watercolour by Esther Lurie, completed in 1943, shows the small wooden houses which made up the bulk of the ghetto. The Slobodka area was already overcrowded before the war, but once it became the ghetto its population rocketed from 12,000 to more than 30,000.

administering, through the *Altestenrat der Jüdischen Ghetto Gemeinde*, council of elders of the Jewish community. Headed by physician Dr. Elhanan Elkes, the *Altestenrat* was mainly responsible for providing the Germans with labour on demand, and for maintaining order by means of the Ghetto police. The council also did its best to provide medical services and to see to the fair distribution of what little food was available.

LIQUIDATION

In June 1943, Himmler decided that all surviving ghettos in the *Reichskommissariat* should be run as concentration camps, and the Kovno ghetto was renamed the *Konzentrationslager Kauen*. Some 4,000 inhabitants were transferred to satellite work camps around the city. Later that year, as the Red Army advanced all along the Eastern Front, the Germans set up



Above: At the beginning of World War Two, there were around 37,000 Jews in Kovno. When the Red Army liberated the ruins of the Ghetto in 1944, they found just 500 people hiding out in bunkers or with the partisans in nearby forests. When the 1,500 who had survived the camps in Germany returned, they found nothing but ruins.

Right: Unlike other ghettos, Kovno had a thriving underground movement in regular contact with anti-Nazi partisan groups hiding out in nearby forests. Most of the underground were former members of young Zionist groups like Ha-Shomer ha-Tseyr, Irgun Berit Zion and He-Haluts ha-Tseyr. In 1943 these united with the Communists to form the Jewish Fighting Organisation. About 350 of the 600 or so members left the Ghetto to set up partisan groups in the Augustov forest.



GHETTO CULTURE

AS IN OTHER GHETTOS, the Jewish community did its best to ensure the survival of the traditional way of life. In spite of the fact that all books were confiscated in February 1942, and all schools were closed, concerts, lectures and discussions took place regularly. Although synagogues were closed and public prayer meetings were banned in August 1942, Talmudic classes continued in secret.

But it was not just religious life which carried on. Writers and artists did all they could to record the horrors of the ghetto. Working in secret, they would use bottles and cans to protect and hide what they produced, often burying them in secure locations. Artists like Esther Lurie and Josef Schlesinger, diarists like Avraham Tory and Tamara Lazerson, and photographer George Kadish ensured that whatever happened, the Kovno ghetto would be remembered.



Left: A sketch by Esther Lurie entitled 'What was left of the hospital'. On 4 October 1941, as the Germans were clearing the Small ghetto, they also destroyed the ghetto's infectious diseases hospital. According to a surviving Altestenrat report, "the contagious disease hospital was closed. All patients, staff and visitors were pushed inside and doors and windows were nailed up." All were shot, and then the building was burned. Though the fire was visible for miles, firemen were not allowed to attend – the Germans wanted it to burn.

Above: Esther Lurie's sombre watercolour depicts Demokratu Square, an open ghetto space used by the Germans and their Lithuanian collaborators as an assembly point. It was here that the inhabitants were gathered during the murderous 'Aktions' which took place at the end of 1941. It was here where selection took place. Those judged fit were set to work. Those not capable of work were sent on the short (less than two kilometre) walk to the Ninth Fort. There, the old, the young, the sick and the lame were put to death by the thousand.



Sonderkommando 1005 to destroy evidence of the massacres and atrocities of the previous two years.

In Kovno, Jewish prisoners and Soviet prisoners of war were used to dig up the thousands of bodies that had been buried in 1941. The remains were burned, and the bones ground down to powder and scattered. The labourers, knowing their own likely fate would be to receive the same treatment, attempted a mass break out in December, and over 60 reached the partisans.

The Red Army's massive summer offensive in 1944 brought them to within striking distance of Kovno by July. The Germans decided to liquidate what remained of the ghetto, deporting 2,000 Jews to camps in Estonia and a further 4,000 to Germany, most being sent to the Stutthof camp. Several thousand Jews tried to avoid the deportations, hiding out in cellars

and in specially prepared bunkers, but the Germans used explosives, flame-throwers and smoke to force them out. Over 2,000 Jews died in the clear out, and less than 100 were still in the ghetto when the Red Army liberated the city on 1 August 1944.

REMEMBERING KOVNO

Only about 2,000 Kovno Jews survived the war. Some returned to the city to live under the Soviets – in 1960 the Jewish population had grown to more than 4,000 – but many preferred to emigrate to Israel. Their suffering has not been forgotten, however, thanks to the artists and writers who survived. The survivors include former science teacher George Kadish, who by means of a secret camera took pictures through a buttonhole. Thanks to him, we have a unique view of everyday life at the receiving end of the Holocaust.



HITLER'S YOUTH

Hitler told his adoring Youth that the future belonged to them. So he took a generation of willing innocents and then trained them to be the storm-troopers who would realise his insane ambitions of world domination.

ON 1 SEPTEMBER 1939, Hitler's armies invaded Poland starting six years of war. The Hitler Youth would eventually participate fully in the conflict; by 1945 even the *Jungvolk* were drawn into combat roles.

At the beginning of 1939, about 7.3 million or 82 percent of young Germans belonged to the *Hitler Jugend*, making it the largest youth organization in the world. On 25 March 1939, membership was made compulsory for all children. Any remaining holdouts were conscripted into the organisation amid warnings to parents that their children would be taken from them and placed in orphanages unless they enrolled. By the outbreak of war membership had risen to 8.8 million.

The war returned a sense of

urgency to the daily activities of the Hitler Youth. The organisation had experienced a slump after 1936, when participation had become mandatory. For many young Germans, HJ meetings and activities had simply become part of the weekly routine.

The original mission of the HJ had been to bring Hitler to power. Victory in the war became the new mission and HJ boys sprang enthusiastically into action, serving first as special postmen delivering draft notices in their neighbourhoods along with monthly ration cards. They also went door to door, collecting scrap metals and other needed war materials.

WAR SERVICE

Since the beginning of the war, Hitler Youths had been functioning as air raid wardens and anti-aircraft (Flak) gun

assistants in Berlin and other cities. British air raids on Berlin began in August 1940, in retaliation for the German bombing of London. The Hitler Youth was now in the front line.

The first thousand-bomber raid hit Cologne in May 1942. In that month, Reich Youth Leader Artur Axmann persuaded Hitler to set up premilitary training camps that all boys between the ages of 16 and 18 were forced to attend. In turn, the SS persuaded the HJ to reserve to them exclusively one fifth of the product of these camps.

In this preparation for combat, especially in the camps run by the SS, German adolescents received a type of training heavily laced with psychological brain-washing. War was taught as a struggle of competing ideologies, culminating in victory or annihilation. The type of soldier produced under this 'fight



A generation betrayed

or die' indoctrination largely explains the continuing Nazi war effort, even when most outsiders and an increasing number of insiders knew Germany's cause was lost.

PIED PIPERS

During the three weeks of mandatory war training the boys learned how to handle German infantry weapons including various pistols, machine-guns, hand grenades and *Panzerfaust* anti-tank weapons.

The Army High Command and the SS were in constant competition for the best recruits. Both organisations assigned veterans to HJ administrative posts primarily as a means of recruitment. They regaled their wide-eyed audiences with the perils and thrills of combat. They reinforced the will to fight the 'Bolshevik hordes' and the 'Jew-backed western powers'. These

Pied Pipers did all they could to produce the cannon-fodder for the Reich war machine.

The results were impressive. Army leaders were the first to acknowledge the achievements of the HJ in preparing recruits for the battlefield. Departing from traditional methods, the HJ tailored paramilitary training to the particular needs and potential of sixteen and seventeen year olds. With the exception of a few coarse SS veterans, there were no hard-bitten drill sergeant types in the training camps. Most cadre members were sensitive young soldiers with substantial HJ experience. German Youth was in effect training itself.

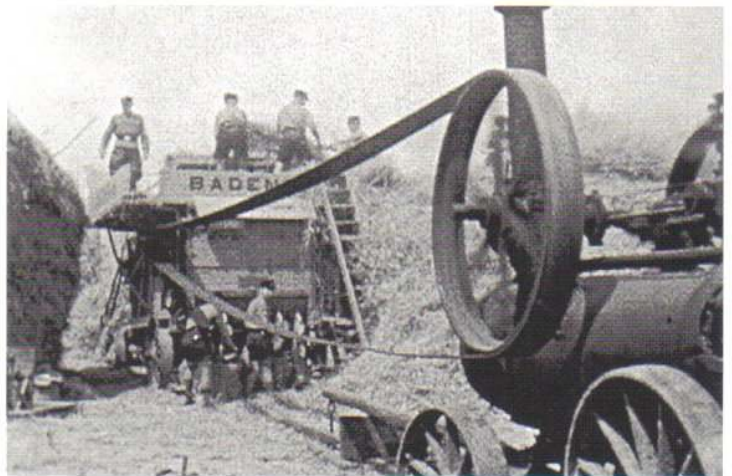
YOUTH LEADS YOUTH

The camps also served to eliminate class distinctions. Boys from town and city, volunteer and conscript were thrown in together. The soldiers

Above: One misguided idealist has his illusions shattered. Is it the shame of being taken captive or the brutal nature of warfare that has reduced this boy soldier to tears?

Opposite page: Smiling but not innocent. Even after Stalingrad, some 95% of German youth was arguably still committed to Adolf Hitler. He had given them an ideal, a Volksgemeinschaft, or sense of national communal solidarity. The youth gave their energy to this dream.

Below: Goebbels called the German nation to the supreme effort of waging 'Total War'. This produced a radical shake-up in society. The men left their fields and factories to pick up rifles, and boys put away their toys to take an adult's place before their time.





Above: Cologne 1943. As the Allied bombing raids on German cities grew ever heavier, so those exposed to the horror of fire fighting and clean-up operations became younger and younger.

Below: Operation 'Werewolf' was the Führer's last gasp. A plan for fanatical young Nazis to continue the fight behind enemy lines, it caused considerable disquiet among the Allied high command. Here a 17 year-old 'Werewolf' is interrogated. He was later sentenced to death.



that were turned out fought with greater professional skill, resourcefulness and independent initiative than their enemy counterparts. Between the spring of 1942 and 1945 every German volunteer and draftee filtered through the HJ training schemes before he donned field grey or SS camouflage. But although he was better trained than his opponent, he was also more prone to embrace the barbarity of battle.

FLAK BATTERIES

Even before being drafted into the training camps, the HJ were directly contributing to German force of arms. By the beginning of 1943, Hitler's armies were stretched to the limit, battling the combined forces of the Soviet Union, United States, Britain and other Allies. By this time, every able-bodied German who could fight was needed in the armed services. But the Flak batteries still had to operate. The slack was taken up by the Hitler Youth, who had already unofficially graduated from running messages and assisting the gunners to manning batteries in their entirety.

At first they were stationed at flak guns near their homes, but as the overall situation deteriorated, they were transferred all over Germany. The younger boys were assigned to operate searchlights and assist with communications, often riding their bicycles as dispatch riders. Older boys manned the guns.

It was far from safe: in October 1943, a searchlight battery received a direct bomb hit. It killed the entire crew of boys, all aged 14 and under.

Following each bombing raid, the Hitler Youth assisted in neighborhood cleanup, and helped relocate bombed out civilians. They knocked on doors looking for unused rooms in undamaged houses or apartments. Occupants refusing to let in the new 'tenants' were reported to the local police and could likely expect a visit from the Gestapo.

As the war situation

deteriorated even the League of German Maidens (BDM) was called upon. Girls, previously thought too delicate to load or handle a pistol, were now to shoot down Allied bombers. The 8.8 cm guns of the 6th Battery, Flak reserve regiment at Vienna-Kagran crewed by BDM girls saw action against the USAAF in 1944. By 1945 they were being redeployed in the anti-tank role against Soviet armour.

The war would only end with the 'unconditional surrender' of Germany and its Axis partners, as stated by President Franklin Roosevelt at the Casablanca Conference in January 1943. In February, Nazi Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels retaliated by issuing a German declaration of 'Total War.'

Amid a dwindling supply of manpower, the existence of an entire generation of ideologically pure boys, raised as Nazis, eager to fight for the Fatherland and even die for the Führer, could not be ignored. The result was the formation of the 12th SS-Panzer Division *Hitlerjugend*.

TOTAL WAR

A recruitment drive began, drawing principally on 17-year-old volunteers. However, boys of 16 and under eagerly joined. During July and August 1943, 10,000 recruits arrived at the training camp in Beverloo, Belgium.

To fill out the HJ Division with enough experienced soldiers and officers, Waffen-SS veterans were drafted from the Russian Front. Many were from the elite *Leibstandarte-SS Adolf Hitler*. The Wehrmacht assigned fifty former Hitler Youth leaders as officers for the division. The remaining shortfall of squad and section leaders was filled with Hitler Youth members who had demonstrated leadership aptitude during HJ paramilitary training.

BABY DIVISION

By the spring of 1944, training was complete. The HJ Panzer Division, now fully trained and equipped, conducted divisional



Above: The Nazis caught the German Youth 'early enough' in most cases. Here three Pimpf (members of the HJ up to 12 years old) read the military instruction manual 'The Castle with the Red Tower.' To these boys, War was glorified as something exciting and heroic.



Above: The aim of the camps was to promote physical health and dexterity, 'manliness' and self-confidence. The ultimate goal was to induce a state of 'combat readiness', regarded by many Nazis as a basic requirement of life.

WEL Camps

Breeding killers

THE NAZIS ASSUMED from the outset that soldiers could not be made in a only couple of years of training – the process should begin in the child's formative years. Once obligatory HJ service was introduced (from 1936) a decade of physical preparation for military performance could follow. One Nazi wrote: "The rifle should fit the hand as naturally as the pen." Although leadership courses, terrain manoeuvres and target shooting were encouraged in the HJ, there

Below: As part of the indoctrination program, war-seasoned veterans were called in to the HJ camps to address the wide-eyed youngsters about the perils and heroism of life at the front. To the innocent, glamour and danger are an irresistible combination.

was no formal method of compulsory premilitary training introduced until 1942. At that stage, given the chronic manpower problems, the state established a network of *Wehrrerüchtigungslager der Hitler-Jugend* or, thankfully, WEL for short. Their remit was to put every member of the HJ between 16 and 18 through 21 days of concentrated training, which prepared the body as well as the psyche for the reality of combat. The camp directors were usually wounded servicemen, with the cadre provided by reserve army and SS NCOs. By May 1943, one year after their creation, over 361,000 boys had been through the 243 camps of the WEL system.

Below: Reichsjugendführer Artur Axmann (centre) with Heinz Guderian on a camp inspection. Axmann told the trainees that their attendance was personally required by Hitler, and that apprentices should use their remaining holiday in attending camp to avoid straining the economy.





Above: The next generation of Hitler's young warriors. These Pimpf wear the 1944 pattern black parade uniform. Most would be thrown uselessly into the bloody holocaust at the Reich's end – a children's crusade against what they had been told were modern infidels.

Below: From February 1943, children aged 15 to 17 were deployed to defend the Reich. These Flakhelfer replaced anti-aircraft soldiers needed at the front and bought great enthusiasm to their work. It is not known how many were lost, but many Flak batteries received direct hits.



manoeuvres observed by General Heinz Guderian and Field Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt. Both senior officers admired the enthusiasm and expressed their approval of the proficiency achieved by the young troops in such a short time. The division was transferred to Hasselt, Belgium, in anticipation of the Allied invasion of northern France, where it subsequently fought with fanaticism and bravery against the numerically superior Allies.

VOLKSSTURM

Hitler's Germany fought to the very last, utilizing every available human and material resource. In September 1944, Artur Axmann, von Schirach's successor as leader of the HJ, proclaimed: "As the sixth year of war begins, Adolf Hitler's youth stands prepared to fight resolutely and with dedication for the freedom of their lives and their future. We say to them: You must decide whether you want to be the last of an unworthy race despised by future generations, or whether you want to be part of a new time, marvellous beyond all imagination."

On 25 September 1944, anticipating the invasion of the Fatherland, the *Volkssturm* was

formed under the overall command of Heinrich Himmler. Every available male aged 16 to 60 was conscripted into this new army and trained to use the *Panzerfaust*. Objections to using even younger boys were bypassed.

WEREWOLVES

In the Ruhr area of Germany, HJ boys practiced guerilla warfare against invading U.S. troops. In the forests, the boys stayed hidden until the tanks passed, waiting for the foot soldiers. They would then spring up, shoot and throw grenades, then dash away and disappear back into the forest. In response to surprisingly heavy casualties, the Americans retaliated with air attacks and levelled several villages.

If the boys happened to get cornered by American patrols, they often battled to the last rather than surrender. And the boys kept getting younger. American troops reported capturing armed 8-year-olds at Aachen and knocking out artillery units operated entirely by boys aged twelve and under.

Himmler and Axmann among others also had plans for an army of young 'Werewolves' who would terrorise the occupying forces and so prolong the fight of National Socialism. The idea was stillborn. As Axmann's army of 5,000 underage soldiers fell in the Battle for Berlin, their Führer took his own way out. With Hitler's death, the children who had been taught to worship the god of National Socialism were released from their chains of obligation. They awoke as if from a sleep.

The optimism and energy of Hitler's youthful followers fuelled his insane dreams. They placed absolute trust in an evil manipulator who utterly abused their faith, and they were deserted after many had made the ultimate sacrifice. The Nazi legacy to the children of Germany was a generation whose innocence had been taken away. Hitler and his followers had stolen their childhood and their lives.



Hitler Jugend Division

Wolves to the slaughter

THE 12TH SS PANZER DIVISION was officially named the "Hitlerjugend." It was often known as the 'baby division,' but not just because the average age of the soldiers was 18. The nick-name contained a healthy dose of irony. These young soldiers were the most fanatical fighters ever to be fielded by the Third Reich. The troopers were the first generation to have lived their formative years under the Nazis, and the results of the indoctrination were awesome.

On D-Day, 6 June 1944, the *Hitlerjugend* was one of three tank divisions held in reserve by Hitler as the Allies stormed the beaches at Normandy. The HJ's baptism of fire would come against an enemy with overwhelming superiority in almost every area, but even so they fought with fanatical bravery. After the death of the division's first commander Fritz Witt, leadership passed to Kurt Meyer, nicknamed 'Pantermeyer,' who at age 33, became the youngest divisional commander in the entire German armed forces.

All but annihilated in France, the 12th SS Panzer Division was reconstituted with an even younger core of volunteers, though to bring it up to strength it had to be fleshed out with a hodgepodge of conscripts. The division participated in the failed Battle of the Bulge in Belgium, and in 1945 played its part in the abortive attempt to recapture Budapest. On 8 May 1945, the 12th SS-Panzer Division *Hitlerjugend* surrendered to the American 7th Army. It numbered just 455 soldiers and one tank.

Below: By September 1944, the 12th SS-Panzer Division Hitlerjugend numbered only 600 surviving young soldiers, with no tanks and no ammunition. Over 9,000 had been lost in Normandy and Falaise.



Above: The Hitler Jugend had been trained by officers of the elite Leibstandarte division. To honour the link the HJ used a variant of the LSSAH's key symbol crossed with a runic 'S' as their divisional emblem.

Right: The division was placed under the command of 35-year-old Generalmajor Fritz Witt, who had been a Hitler Youth before 1933. He was killed by a direct hit on his headquarters from a British warship.



Below: In many ways the boys kept the rebelliousness of youth. They defied military convention. Some dressed in U-boat crew clothing, while others painted their girlfriends' names over their tanks rather than the authorised insignia.



THE HOLOCAUST



AKTION REINHARD



Polish ghetto Jews before the war knew that life was hard, but all of the anti-Semitism they had experienced in the past would pale when compared to the horrors to come. First they were herded into ghettos, and then they were subjected to one of the most brutal and effective programmes of mass murder ever recorded.



The aims of *Aktion Reinhard* were simple – to eliminate the Jews of Poland. And by eliminate the Nazis meant only one thing: murder by the million.

The Jews of the Warsaw ghetto are rounded up by SS and German police units. The clearing of the ghetto in 1942 was one of the largest operations in Aktion Reinhard: more than 300,000 victims were sent to Treblinka.

AUSCHWITZ may be the Nazi death camp with the most evil reputation, but it was not the only factory of death, nor was it the first. In 1942 and 1943, before the better known camp in Silesia got into its murderous stride, the camps at Belzec, Sobibor and Treblinka were being used to massacre Poland's Jews.

The Polish genocide was a conscious decision on the part of the Nazis, designed to clear space for German settlers once the war was won. The operation became known as the *Aktion Reinhard* after the death of Reinhard Heydrich on 4 June 1942.

The origins of the *Aktion* dated back to October 1941. Himmler assigned *Brigadeführer* Odilo Globocnik, *SS-und Polizeiführer* of the Lublin District, the task of eliminating all Jews in the German-occupied *Generalgouvernement*.

Globocnik, a virulent anti-Semite from an Austrian/Croat family, had been a Nazi since 1931, and was briefly Gauleiter of Vienna after the *Anschluss*. Globocnik's new job was to include the seizure of Jewish property and the looting of Jewish valuables.

HITLER'S WISHES

This was in accordance with Hitler's wishes, who in a table conversation in January 1942 is recorded as saying "Today we must fight the same battle as Pasteur and Koch. The cause of many illnesses is a bacillus – the Jews. We will only become healthy if we eliminate the Jew."

Two months later he was to say "the whole East must become and remain German – primeval German. That task I have given to my loyal Himmler, and he is already accomplishing it."

Globocnik was given a staff of 450 SS men outside the normal

chain of command and answerable only to their own superior and to Himmler. Included in their number were about 100 men with extensive experience of the Euthanasia programme, which had seen the use of poison gas to eliminate the disabled, the retarded and the chronically sick. At the head of this particular group was *Kriminalkommissar* Christian Wirth, a former security policeman who had conducted the first gassing experiments on the insane.

Gassing was chosen because shooting, which up until that time had been used by the *Einsatzgruppen* in the east, had been too close and personal for even the most hardened of the SS killers – morale on the murder squads was plummeting even as alcohol consumption rose.

The Germans employed on *Aktion Reinhard* were primarily supervisors. Most of the day-to-

day work of genocide was performed by about 300 Ukrainian volunteer auxiliaries, who were specially trained for the job at an SS facility in the Trawniki concentration and labour camp.

Globocnik set up three special camps. Belzec, Sobibor and Treblinka had one function only. They were not built to house prisoners; they were not built to provide slaves for Germany's war industries. The *Aktion Reinhard* camps had only one product – and that was dead Jews.

SECRET KILLING FIELDS

All three shared some key characteristics. Each was near a railway line, for the easy transportation of victims. And they were isolated, to prevent knowledge of what was happening leaking out to the general population.

Aktion Reinhard's selection process was simple. When it was



Left: Victims were told that the death camps were simply transit points on their way to labour camps further east, and they would need to disinfect before going further. The gas chambers were disguised as showers, or Brausebads.



Left: Once the 'showers' were full, exhaust gasses from diesel or petrol engines were pumped into the chambers. Although slower than Zyklon-B, carbon monoxide proved equally fatal.



Above: Franz Stangl commanded both Sobibor and Treblinka in his time. A graduate of the Euthanasia programme, he escaped to Brazil after the war, but was extradited back to Germany in 1970. Sentenced to life, he died in prison.

Above left: Christian Wirth was the executive head of the Genocide in Poland. Commandant of Belzec he established the machinery of death which was used as a pattern by the other camps. He was killed by Partisans (or possibly by his own men) in 1944.

Left: Doctor Irmfried Eberl was the first commandant of Treblinka. He was fired for bringing deportees to the gas chambers before the bodies of earlier victims had been removed. He killed himself in 1948 while under arrest for war crimes.



Left: After about 30 minutes, squads of Jewish 'kapos' were called in to remove the bodies. These men lived a little longer than their fellows, but were usually shot by the guards after a few weeks of grisly work.

decided to liquidate a ghetto, all its inhabitants were rounded up and sent to the death camps. In the larger ghettos, the local Jewish councils were told simply to provide the requisite number of victims – between three and six thousand, depending on the size of the train available for the transport.

MECHANICS OF GENOCIDE

The procedures at Belzec, Sobibor and Treblinka were similar. Once at the death camp, the Jews were hurried off the train. Initially, they were to be given a 'quiet welcome' – the idea was to convince them that they were in transit to a labour camp but before they could go any further they needed to be disinfected.

In the reception area by the rail track a small number of men were pulled aside for work commandos. The remainder of

the deportees were moved into a nearby barrack block, where they were ordered to undress and hand over any valuables. At Belzec and Treblinka, the women were then taken into an adjoining room or building where their hair was shorn.

From there they were moved in batches of fifty or so through a track some three to four metres wide, with high barbed wire fences either side. The fences had foliage woven into their strands. The pathway was known to the guards as the 'Schlauch' or the 'Himmelfahrtsweg' (the 'Tube' or the 'Road to Heaven'). At Sobibor, women were diverted about half way up the tube to a small building where they had their hair removed.

At the end of the tube were the gas chambers, disguised as showers. The victims were crowded into the sealed rooms, the doors were shut, and tank

engines exhausting into the chambers were started.

The principle agent of death was carbon monoxide. By reducing the fuel/air ratio and by cramming the victims in the gas chamber, the Germans could increase the concentration of gas to a lethal level in a very short time. After about 30 minutes, the doors were opened, and *Sonderkommandos* of Jewish prisoners removed the bodies.

BODY DISPOSAL

None of the *Aktion Reinhard* camps had the elaborate crematoria later installed at Auschwitz. In the first months, after searching the remains for gold teeth and valuables secreted about their persons, the bodies were buried in huge trenches. Later in 1942 these were exhumed and the remains were burned on huge pyres. From then on victims were cremated in the

open immediately after gassing.

Himmler visited Globocnik at Lublin a few days before Treblinka became operational. He gave orders that the Jews of Poland be eliminated by the end of 1942. This proved beyond the capacity of the system, however, and *Aktion Reinhard* continued into the Autumn of 1943. By this time the three original camps had been closed and demolished, and remaining Polish Jews were concentrated at Trawniki, Poniatowa and Majdanek.

On 3 November, all the Jews in these camps, together with Jews working as slave labourers in nearby factories were shot. A total of 43,000 died in the operation, known as *Aktion Erntefest* ('Harvest Festival').

Aktion Reinhard had lasted only 21 months, but in that time the SS and their Ukrainian and Latvian assistants killed more than two million Polish Jews.

CAMPS OF DEATH

Belzec

Belzec, located between Lublin and Lvov, was built between November 1941 and February 1942 on the site of a disused labour camp. Its commander was the notorious Christian Wirth. He was succeeded by Gottlob Hering in August 1942, after Wirth was made supervisor of all the *Reinhard* camps.

The first killing operation at Belzec took place on 17 March. Victims were mainly taken from the ghettos in the Krakow and Lvov regions. Around 600,000 were murdered at Belzec before the killing operation was closed down in December 1942. Belzec was one of the most lethal of all the death camps – very few deportees survived, and only one person escaped to tell his story.

Sobibor

Sobibor was built in March and April 1942 and gassing began in May. Franz Stangl took command in April 1942, succeeded by Franz Reichleitner in September. Most victims were from the local area, though later deportees included several thousand from Lvov after the closure of Belzec. Among the 250,000 who died were Jews from Russian ghettos and Western Europe.

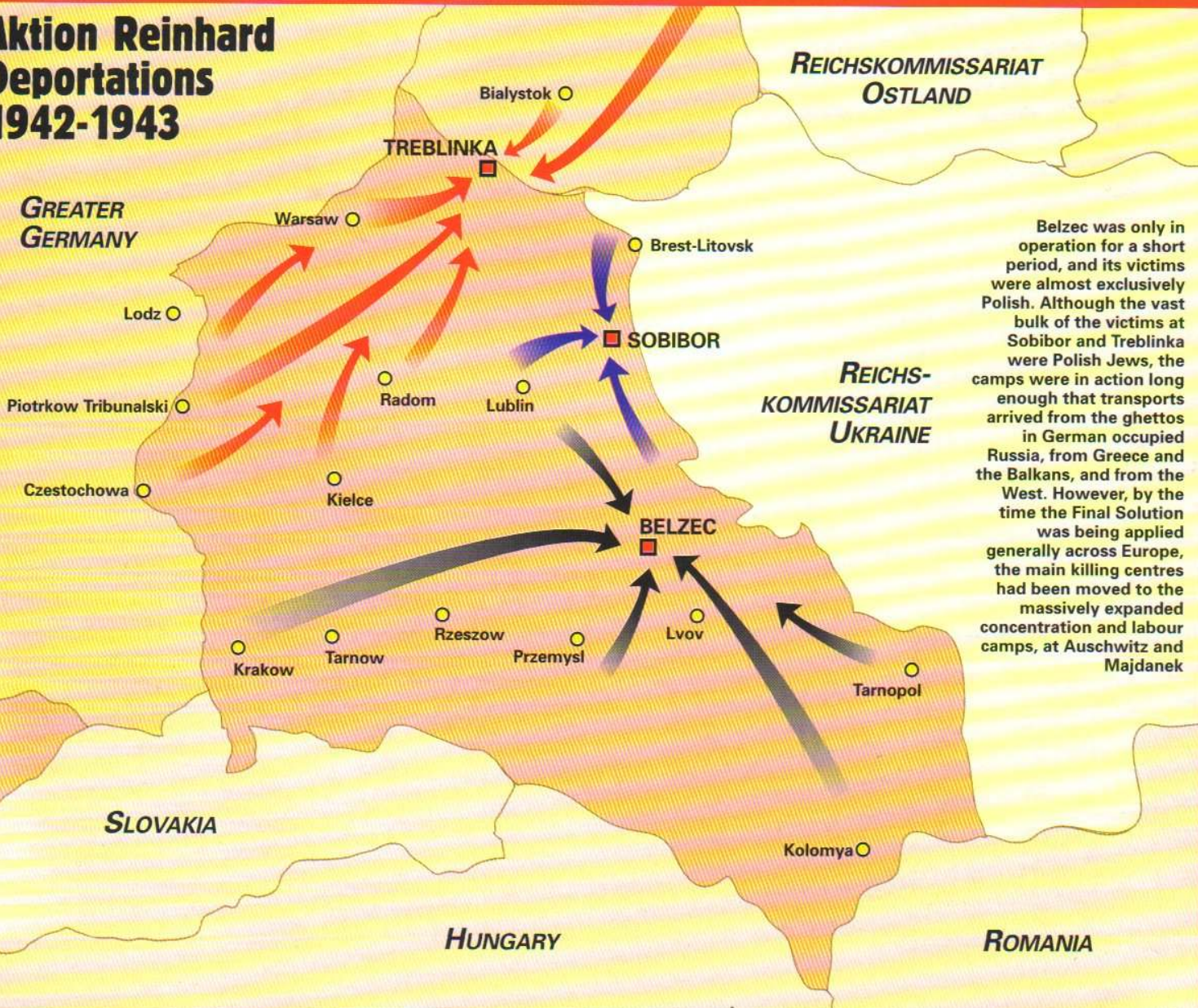
Gassing continued until October 1943. The camp was closed that month after a major inmate revolt saw some 300 prisoners break out. To hide any traces of its murderous past Himmler ordered that all the camp buildings be dismantled and removed, following which the ground was ploughed under.

Treblinka

Mass murder began at Treblinka on 23 July 1942. Irmfried Eberl, Franz Stangl and Kurt Franz were the commanders. Victims came from the Warsaw and Radom districts, transports also coming from Germany, the Balkans, and central Europe. Killing at Treblinka continued until May 1943. As many as 850,000 may have died there.

After gassing at Treblinka stopped, Aktion 1005 began to dig up evidence of mass murder and obliterate it. On 2 August 1943 the remaining prisoners stormed the camp's main gate. Several hundred escaped, though most were tracked down and killed. Much of the camp was burned in the fighting, so the Germans simply demolished the rest and killed all remaining prisoners.

Aktion Reinhard Deportations 1942-1943



Belzec was only in operation for a short period, and its victims were almost exclusively Polish. Although the vast bulk of the victims at Sobibor and Treblinka were Polish Jews, the camps were in action long enough that transports arrived from the ghettos in German occupied Russia, from Greece and the Balkans, and from the West. However, by the time the Final Solution was being applied generally across Europe, the main killing centres had been moved to the massively expanded concentration and labour camps, at Auschwitz and Majdanek.



HITLER'S HENCHMEN



The House of **Krupp** HITLER'S ARMOURERS

Germany's biggest company was so important to the Third Reich that its owners and board members were singled out for special treatment by the Allies after the end of the war.

ARMS MAKERS depend on two main raw materials – coal and iron ore. Coal is the lifeblood of industry: it provides the power to run the factories, it provides the heat to fire the blast furnaces. And it is the iron ore which is converted into steel – steel for use in cannon, armour plate, tanks and submarines.

Eighty percent of Germany's coal and steel industry is centred on the Ruhr valley. Occupied by French troops in 1923, the Ruhr was vital to the economic life of the country. The French presence generated a bitter hatred and a burning for revenge which would help Hitler's rise to power.

If coal and steel were the keys

to Germany's prosperity and the rebirth of her armaments industry, then the key to that armaments industry was Krupp, Germany's largest and most influential steel concern for more than a century.

KRUPP AND THE KAISER

The Krupp family of metalworkers settled in the Ruhr in the 16th Century but rose to prominence in the 19th century. Friedrich Krupp founded a cast steel plant in 1811: under his son Alfred, known as the 'Cannon King', it became world famous. Alfred's son Friedrich Alfred Krupp saw the business expand dramatically, partly to meet demand from the rapidly growing German Navy, and partly from

Above: The Krupp works at Essen was just the tip of an industrial giant. Krupp support of the Third Reich saw the company spread its acquisitive tentacles all through occupied Europe. The company even set up plants in concentration camps.

royalties on Krupp armour plate being paid by arms manufacturers all over the world. At the turn of the 20th century, Krupp employed more than 40,000 people.

Krupp provided a large proportion of Germany's heavy weapons during World War I, but after the war the company had to move out of the armaments business. Indeed, the Treaty of Versailles singled out Krupp in particular, and ordered that its artillery and armour



production lines be destroyed. The company survived, however, under the leadership of Gustav Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach

Gustav von Bohlen und Halbach was born in the Hague, the son of a diplomat.

He graduated in Law from Heidelberg in 1893, and joined the Prussian Foreign Office. In 1899, he was posted to Washington as *Legationssekretär*, moving on to the Prussian Legation to the Vatican in 1904.

He married Bertha Krupp, heiress to the Krupp fortune, in 1906. Getting permission from Kaiser Wilhelm II to add the Krupp family name to his own, he became a board member that year, and was appointed chairman in 1909. A neat, almost obsessively ordered man, he served on the Prussian state council from 1921 to 1933.

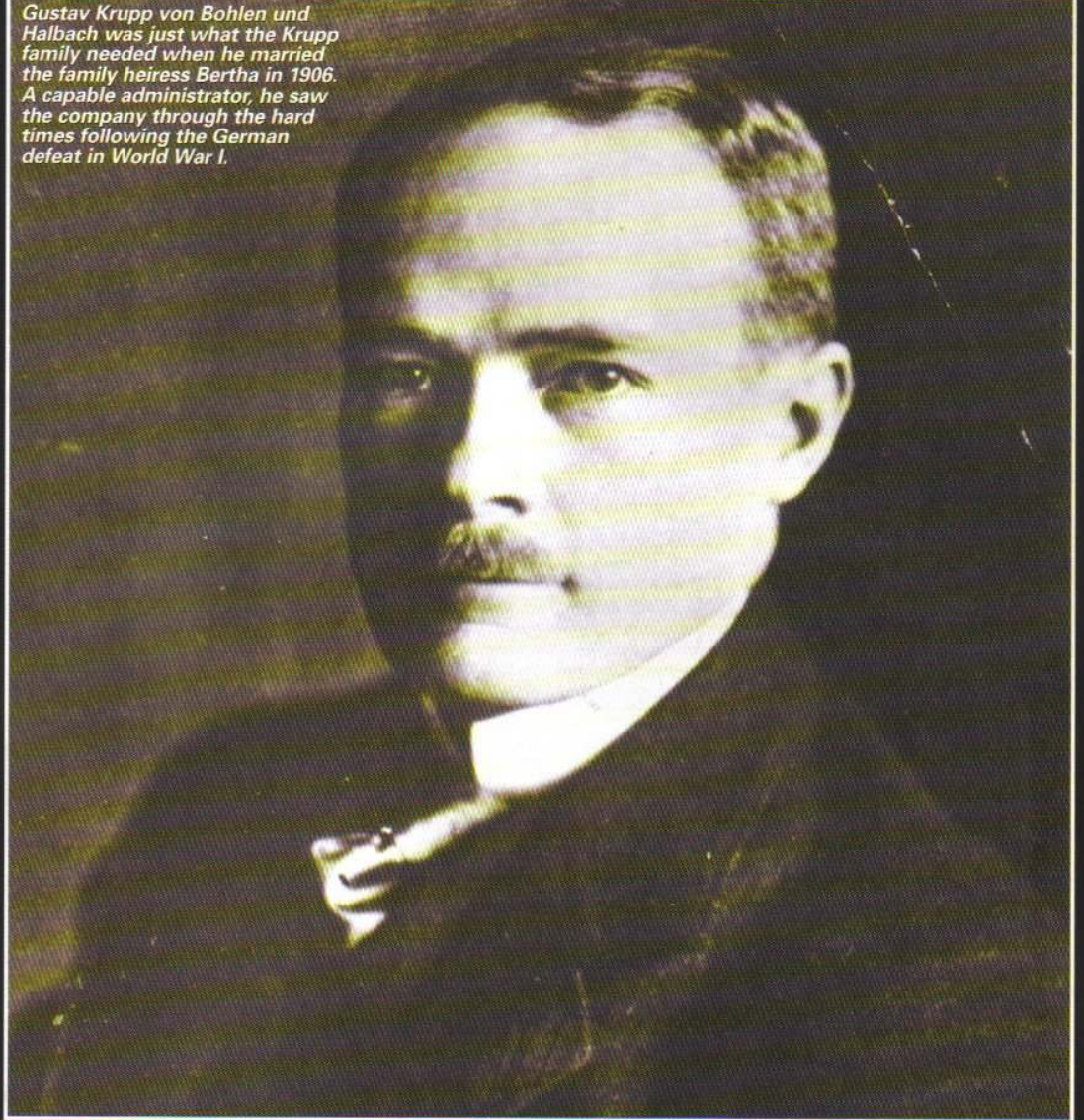
BANNED BY VERSAILLES

With the outbreak of war in 1914, Krupp lost most of its overseas markets, and Gustav Krupp switched production to armaments. After the war was lost, the Krupp concern was considered by the Allies to bear a large part of the German guilt for the conflict. Forbidden to make weapons by the terms of the Versailles Treaty, Gustav Krupp ensured the survival of the company by diversifying. Within weeks of the Armistice he introduced a new company slogan, *Wir machen Alles*, or "We make everything." He converted Krupp factories to the production of consumer goods such as baby carriages and type writers.

The company was still permitted to produce and export steel, however, which was the foundation of any armaments industry, and it remained in the heavy industrial business through the manufacture of railway engines and lorries. Starting from its first engine in 1919, Krupp had produced over 2000 locomotives by the late 1930s.

But Krupp was an arms business, and with the secret assistance of the government and the army it set about getting

Gustav Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach was just what the Krupp family needed when he married the family heiress Bertha in 1906. A capable administrator, he saw the company through the hard times following the German defeat in World War I.



around the terms of the Versailles treaty. In the 1920s, Krupp artillery design teams were moved to Sweden and the Netherlands, where they continued to develop new weapons. By the late 1920s, the Allied control commissions had left Germany, and it was safe for the design teams to return home.

Krupp survived the depression making steel, trains and trucks, but with the accession of Adolf Hitler to power it was soon back doing what it knew best – building guns. Thanks to the secret work in the 1920s the concern had advanced new weapons in production in an astonishingly short time.

Diplomat, banker and industrialist, Gustav had initially

opposed Hitler and the Nazis, but on their accession to power he became an enthusiast. In May 1933 he was appointed chairman of the *Adolf Hitler-Spende*, a fund raised by industrialists for Nazi benefit. Hitler lauded his company as a National Socialist model workplace, and appointed him a Military Economy Führer in 1937.

NEW GENERATION

By the outbreak of World War II, Krupp controlled 87 major factories and industrial plants and 110 companies in Germany alone: the firm also had interests all over the world, having a controlling interest in more than 40 overseas companies. During the war Krupp was the main

supplier of heavy weaponry to the Wehrmacht and the Kriegsmarine, using large numbers of slave labourers in its many works and yards.

Gustav Krupp suffered a severe stroke in 1941, and although nominally in charge of the company, for the next two years he was little more than a figurehead. In 1943 Gustav handed control to his eldest son Alfried, just as the Krupp company was returned from public ownership to the family. Gustav was senile by the end of the war and so escaped being tried for war crimes at Nuremberg. He died at Bluhnbach on 16 January 1950.

Son and heir of Gustav Krupp, Alfried Krupp was born on 13



Above: An older Gustav Krupp greets Reichsführer SS Heinrich Himmler at the launch of the heavy cruiser Prinz Eugen from the Krupp Germania Werft yard at Kiel. Once the Krupp concern swung its weight behind Hitler, it profited greatly from the Nazi rearmament programme.

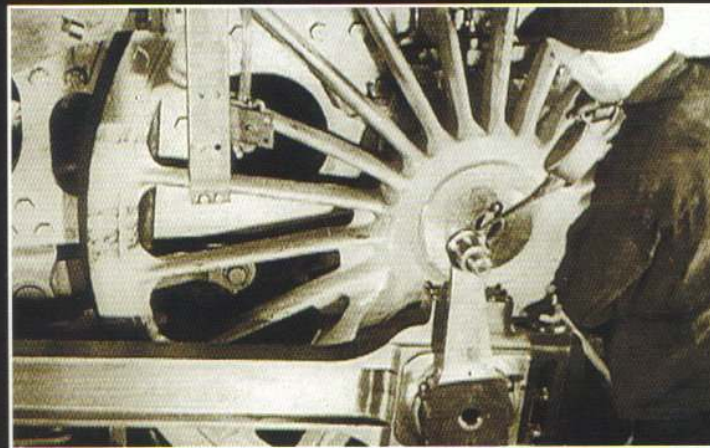


Above: Alfred Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach, seen here showing World War I hero Field Marshal von Mackensen around the Krupp artillery works, was the man most responsible for taking the concern down the war crimes route, using as many as 100,000 slaves in his factories.



Above: The Krupp family listens to a eulogy presented by Deputy Führer Rudolf Hess on the occasion of Gustav Krupp's 70th birthday. The family home in Essen played host to most of the senior Nazis at one time or another, from functionaries right up to Hitler himself.

Below: Krupp workers prepare a railway engine for delivery. Gustav Krupp introduced the motto "We make anything" at the height of the depression, and the company did its best to live up to the boast.



August 1907. Trained as an engineer at Munich, Berlin and Aachen, he joined the company in 1935. In 1936 he qualified as an attorney, in the same year winning a Bronze medal in the Olympic sailing regatta.

NAZI SUPPORT

Alfried was given responsibility for the company's armaments division, which with German rearmament was becoming increasingly important. In 1937 Hitler awarded him the title of *Wehrwirtschaftsführer*, or Military Economy Leader. He joined the Nazi Party in 1938, as soon as the NSDAP began accepting new members after the flood of opportunist 'Märzgefallenen' who had joined in 1933. However he had been a 'Contributing Member' of the SS since 1931, and was active in the NSFK, the National Socialist Flyer's Corps.

Alfried was an enthusiastic supporter of Hitler's war. To all intents and purposes he controlled the Krupp organisation from 1940, officially taking over from his father (who had suffered two strokes) in 1942. Under his direction the Krupp concern moved to new factories in territories occupied by the

Germans, and looted industrial plant from the occupied countries was returned to the Krupp works. Krupp had no compunction about using conscripted labour or camp slaves in his factories. By 1943, when he became sole owner of the company, Krupp was using more than 100,000 involuntary workers, including a number labouring in an ammunition factory at Auschwitz. In all, about three quarters of the slaves working in Krupp plants died – which is a higher mortality rate than in all but the very worst concentration camps.

RETRIBUTION

Captured by the Canadians at the end of the war, he was brought before the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg to be tried both for crimes against humanity and for plundering European industry. Alfried was sentenced to 12 years in prison and his property was forfeited. The firm's board was also tried, and the Krupp family was ordered to sell three quarters of its holdings. But there were no buyers.

In the changing Cold War political climate, West Germany was seen by the Americans as a bulwark against Communism, and to rebuild German industry



Krupp and Hitler



Below: It was part of the carefully cultivated Hitler Myth that he was one with the workers (although in reality he came from a comfortable lower middle class background). On factory visits he made a point of seeking out ordinary workers, often being photographed in the process.



Left: Adolf Hitler knew that he had to get the big industrialists on his side if he was to succeed in taking power. Between them, Krupp, Thyssen and the United Steelworks had German heavy industry pretty much sewn up, so he visited their works on numerous occasions.

Right: Krupp did not really support Hitler until the Nazis came to power in 1933, but then more than made up for lost time. Here, Gustav describes the 'glories' of National Socialism to his workers.



IN A SPEECH delivered on 18 October 1933, at the first meeting of the Committee for Industrial and Social policy of the Reich Association of German Industry, Gustav Krupp affirmed his aim to bring the Association into accord with the political goals of the Nazi government. To his fellows, he said:

"To have united an entire Nation is the historic triumph of the man into whose strong hands our President has placed the fate of our people.

"When Reichschancellor and Führer Adolf Hitler called the General Council of Economy together for the first time on 20 September, I had the honour to thank him for the confidence which he had put in the men of the business world by calling them to the General Council. I pledged unrestrained support for his Government in its exceedingly difficult task, from all branches of the economy.

"I repeat now what I said then. The unshakable faith of our Reichschancellor and Führer in the future of our people gives to men of business the courage and strength to put everything into the reconstruction of a healthy National Economy, in a strong National State, under wise National Socialist leadership.

"You, too, gentlemen, if I have your confidence, are bound to this pledge. For all of us, it creates a deep obligation to guarantee the unconditional execution of the Führer's will in all links and branches of Industry. May the spirit of devotion to duty which inspires us always dominate this Committee's conferences!

"I ask you, gentlemen, to rise and to join me in the toast: To the President of the German Reich, Generalfeldmarschal von Hindenburg, and the German People's Chancellor and Führer, Adolf Hitler.

"Sieg Heil!"

Krupp was needed. Alfried was released from Landsberg in 1951 and his property and companies (valued in the millions) were restored to him. By the 1960s Krupp had diversified into a wide range of consumer, industrial and heavy engineering concerns, and Alfried Krupp was once again one of the world's most wealthy men.

He died in Essen on 30 July 1967. To this day his company remains one of Europe's largest conglomerates.

Right: Alfried Krupp (right) seen in the late 1950s with former Krupp managers. By this time he had steered the concern towards profitability after the damage caused by Allied bombs and war-crimes trials at Nuremberg.





Dodecanese 1943

Slamming the back door

When the Fascist government fell in July 1943, Italy, formerly a liability to the Germans, became a possible threat. Hitler would have to move fast in the Aegean if he was to protect his troops in the the Balkans.

THE LARGE-SCALE defections of Italian garrisons in the Eastern Mediterranean in September 1943 compromised the entire German position in the Balkans, Greece and the Aegean, putting the Reich's southern flank at risk.

CHURCHILL'S OBSESSION

The British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, who was obsessed with operations in the Aegean, sought to exploit the disintegration of the Axis alliance. Accordingly a British presence was established by effecting landings on the Dodecanese islands of Kos, Samos and Leros off the Turkish coast on 12 September 1943.

This operation was part of a larger plan in which the island of Rhodes would be attacked and

occupied. This island had a reported garrison of 35,000 Italians and 7,000 Germans and if with British assistance the Italians attacked the Germans the operation would enjoy a high possibility of success.

TURKISH ALLIANCE

The British felt that military success in the Dodecanese would bring neutral Turkey into the war on the side of the Allies. This would not only bring reinforcements to the Allied forces in the eastern Mediterranean, but would also deny the SD (German Military Intelligence) access via Turkey to the USSR, a route they used to pass agents into the Caucasus. The SD ensured that the arrangement with Turkey remained amicable by passing on any intelligence that had been

collected that might be of value to the Turks.

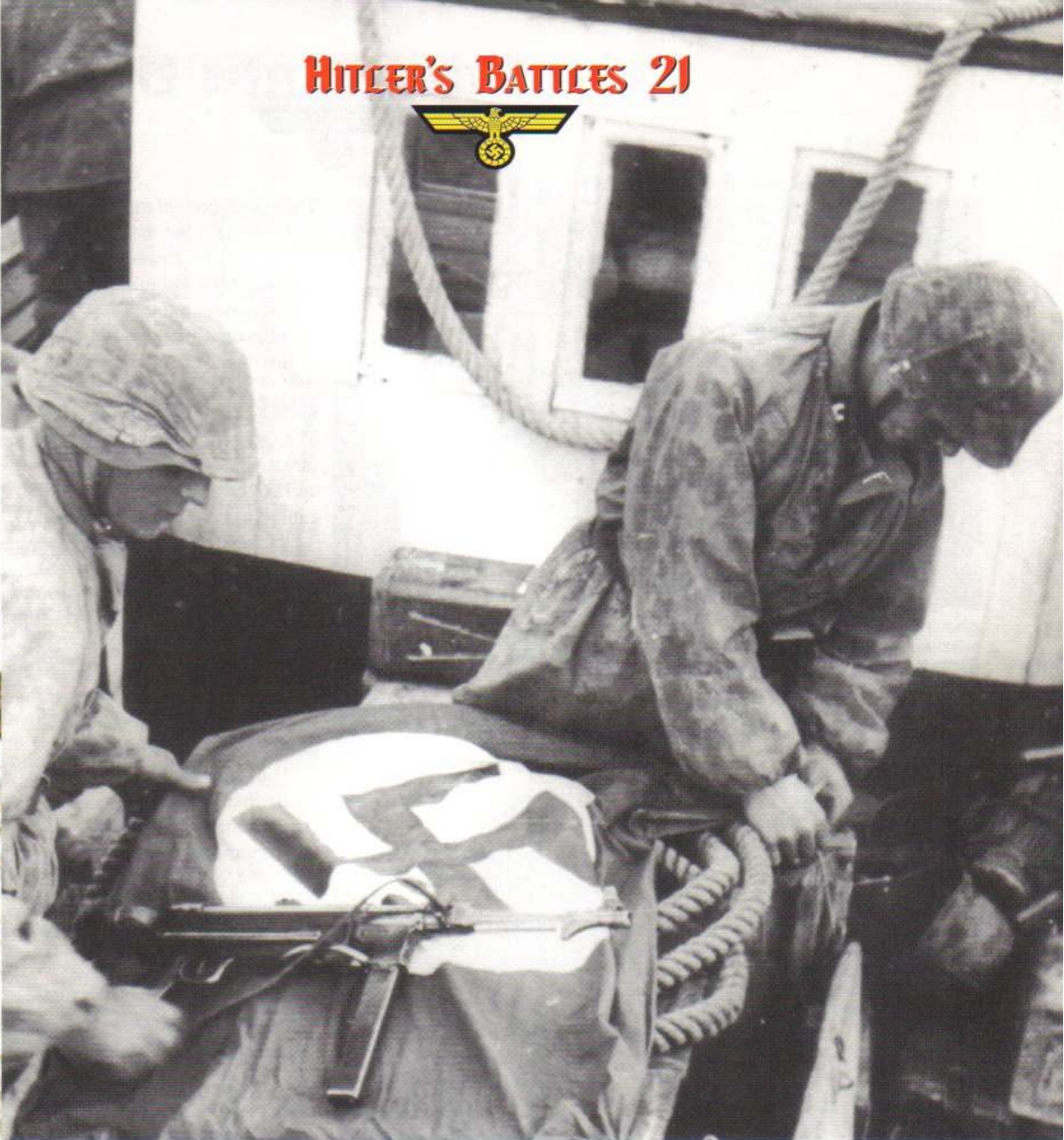
The Dodecanese are a cluster of twelve major and numerous smaller islands that are predominantly Greek speaking. They were part of the Ottoman Empire until 1912 when following the Tripolitan War they were ceded to Italy along with Tripolitania and Cyrenaica. German bombers and fighters based on Scarpanto, one of the more southerly islands in the group were able to keep up almost continuous attacks on the British and Commonwealth forces in Crete during the invasion in early 1941. To their cost the British chose to ignore this German base in the coming operation.

The main problem for the British was that the Americans were unenthusiastic about an



The short Greek campaign in the autumn of 1943 put British dilettantism into sharp relief against German professionalism. Had the Allies siezed the opportunity given to them by the Italian defection, the war might have been considerably shortened.

Right: German troopers secure an aircraft identification marking. The Luftwaffe had a large presence in the Eastern Mediterranean, where any unidentified vessel could be targetted as a craft potentially used by partisans.



operation which they viewed as a distraction. Resources, including air support would therefore be strictly rationed. Interestingly the OKW (*Oberkommando der Wehrmacht*) later had its own reservations about the feasibility of holding the Dodecanese, and proposed a partial withdrawal from the area; Hitler vetoed the suggestion on 1 October 1943.

BOMBING RHODES

The first phase of the formal attack by the British saw an air raid by Liberator bombers on the airfields on Rhodes on 13 September 1943. Earlier, on 8 September, Major Earl Jellicoe, Major Dolbey, an interpreter and a signaller from the SBS (Special Boat Squadron) had landed on the island and contacted the Italian garrison. The commander of the garrison, Admiral

Campioni made them welcome, but would not commit himself to the Allies. On 14 September a British SBS reconnaissance unit arrived, landing in caiques from Kos. They were later joined on 18 September by the British 234th Brigade. However, by this time the Italian garrison of 40,000 had been disarmed by a small German force, who succeeded in repelling the British units. The Germans through prompt action had rescued the situation in the most important of the islands.

RACE FOR THE ISLANDS

The British had however beaten the Germans in the race to Samos, Leros and Kos.

Kos is a bare 2 km from Turkey and stretches about 50 km from east to west and 11 km north to south. Its highest

point is a ridge line about 935 metres high. On the north are a number of sandy beaches, but the south has a rocky coastline. There are two airfields at the towns of Marmari and Lambia.

Leros is smaller; about 15 km long with two bays on the west coast and one, Alinda Bay on the east where the capital Leros is located. The key to the island is Rachi Ridge, high ground dominating the terrain between Alinda Bay and Gurna Bay on the east. The island is about 7 kilometres wide at its widest point and has a central rocky spine of rising ground reaching up to 180 metres.

On all three islands the British succeeded in reinforcing their forces to battalion strength and beyond. But they were unable to fly in heavy equipment due to the very active Luftwaffe presence in

the theatre, and had to make use of whatever the Italians had left to them.

UNDERGUNNED BRITISH

The biggest windfall was on Leros. Here the British made use of a troop of 25 pounders – they were in fact British guns captured by the Germans earlier in the war and fitted with German sights and ranging aids. Twelve 40 mm Bofors guns of the 3rd Light AA Battery Royal Artillery (RA) provided air defence. Such equipment was woefully inadequate to the task, but British planners rejected the idea of committing parachute troops, considering the island too rocky. In this assessment they were proved partly right. The British were joined by the Italian garrison of 5,500 men. Half of these were administrative staff.



Above: Garrisons on the various Greek islands tended to strike up good relations with the local inhabitants. The war seemed far-off, food for the Germans was plentiful, the climate was convivial. For a time they could enjoy a good war.

Below: Fighting on Samos and Leros was brief, but some of the British garrison evaded capture and went to ground. The Germans were anxious to hunt down the enemy troops in case their presence inspired opposition against the occupying forces.



There was one infantry battalion of 1,000 men but they were equipped with obsolete weapons. The Italians had built 24 naval batteries with a total of 100 guns of different calibres – but most of these were in open gun pits.

CROSSHEAD

The German reaction to the new threat was systematic, vigorous and effective. Between the Italian capitulation on 8 September and 3 October *Luftwaffenkommando Süd-Ost* was reinforced by 110 combat aircraft raising its strength to 345 assorted types, including 90 Ju 88s and He 111s, 50 Me 109s and 65 Ju 87s. These aircraft had been drawn from southern France, Italy, Corsica and even southern Russia.

The Germans first moved on Cephalonia, which covered the Gulf of Corinth, on 21 September. They then moved on Corfu, the main fortress on the Eastern side of the Straits of Otranto, followed by the capture of Split Island on 25 September. Having secured their supply routes through the Adriatic to their bases in Greece and the Aegean the Germans now turned their attention to the Dodecanese.

The Allies attempted to stop the German build up with air attacks on airfields in Crete,

Rhodes and Greece by a mixed force of Liberators, Halifaxes, Wellingtons and Hudsons. The British were at a disadvantage because operating at a range of over 500 kilometres meant that aircraft and light vessels had limited fuel for combat in the Dodecanese. The anti-aircraft defences on Kos, now strengthened by Bofors 40 mm AA guns, were unable to prevent the Luftwaffe from neutralising the airfields and island-based fighters. The local superiority of the Luftwaffe also meant that the Royal Navy could only operate in the area at night, giving them little opportunity for intercepting the German invasion convoys moving towards Kos.

CROSSHEAD

The first German landings on Kos, codenamed Operation Polar Bear, began at around 4am on 3 October. Some 1,200 troops commanded by *Generalleutnant* Müller landed at Marmari under the cover of a massive air bombardment. An Italian 75 mm artillery battery opened fire against the German forces and a British platoon went forward to investigate. The Germans also landed in the south of the island, and at Camare Bay forced an Italian battery back into the hills.

At Antimachia, a company of *Fallschirmjäger* landed and despite suffering casualties from small arms fire and the harsh terrain were able to establish a lodgement. The Germans were well supported by the Luftwaffe, which had been able to land light artillery and armoured cars.

The Allied defenders were broken up into small groups and Colonel L.R.F. Kenyon, the garrison commander, decided that his troops should attempt to escape into the hills and continue resistance as guerrillas.

A unit of German Special

Left: Late 1943, and the Dodecanese islands erupted into furious activity. The calm of occupation was shattered by the Italian collapse, which prompted Hitler to send some of his best available troops. Acting with their customary vigour, they rescued a desperate situation.





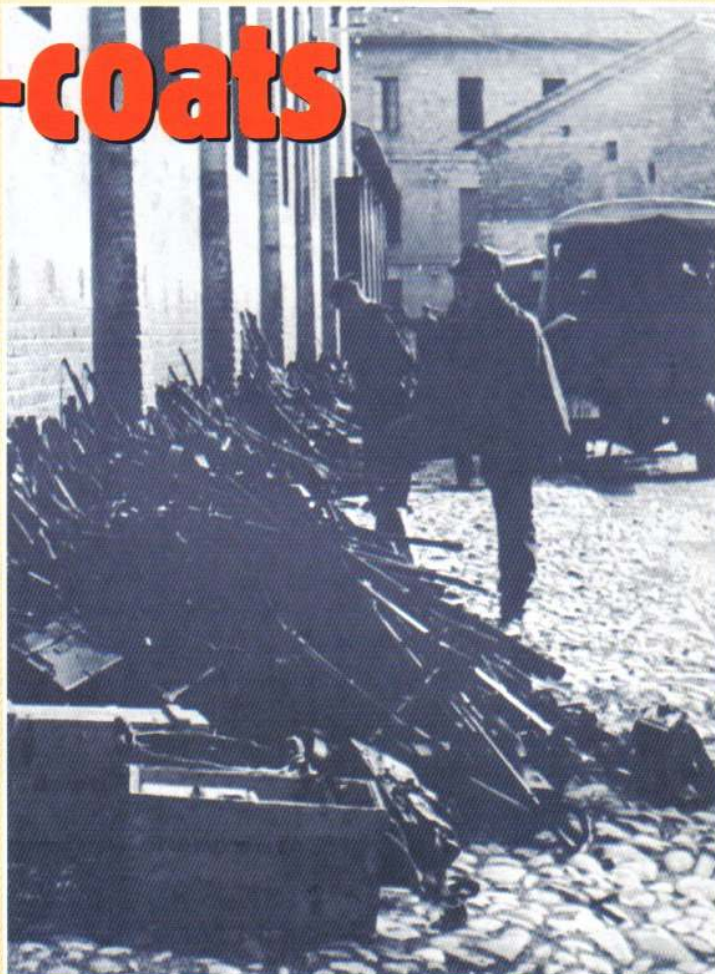
Italian Turn-coats

WITH THE INVASION of its home territory in September 1943, the Italian government quickly concluded an armistice with the Allies. The German High Command had been preparing for such a contingency ever since the fall of Mussolini on 24 July. In an operation codenamed *Achse* German forces immediately occupied mainland Italy and the Balkans. Although the Italian armed forces were told that they could disband themselves and return to their homes after being disarmed, Hitler had his own more vindictive agenda.

He ordered that members of Italian formations were to be treated as prisoners of war and transported to Germany. Where formations resisted a German ultimatum or allowed their weapons to fall into the enemy's hands, the responsible Italian officers were to be shot on the spot and the men sent to Russia. The German Army – for the SD and the Waffen SS played no part – were quite prepared to carry through the draconian orders. They regarded them as 'traitors' and the shootings they considered within the bounds of military law.

The Greek island of Kefalonia was witness to the biggest atrocity in the whole bitter affair. Here the understrength Italian Acqui Division commanded by General Gandin held off the German garrison and a battalion of *Gebirgsjäger* supported by Junkers 87s. After a week, the fighting degenerated into a wholesale massacre when the German troops began executing their Italian prisoners in groups of four. By the time the shooting ended 4,750 Italian soldiers lay dead. Some 4000 survivors were shipped off to Germany for forced labour. In the Mediterranean a few of the transport ships hit mines and sank, taking around 3,000 to their deaths.

Below: At the Armistice the Italian navy managed to escape largely intact to Malta, but Hitler ordered the transport of the 600,000 members of the Italian army in German-held areas – roughly one-quarter of the entire Italian armed forces – to Germany for work in labour camps. One in ten of the transported soldiers were to die.



Above, below and below left: When the island of Kos in the Aegean, fell to the German forces, a total of 1,388 British and 3,145 Italian troops were taken prisoner. Italy had signed an armistice on 8 September and the Italian troops were now fighting their former axis partners, on the side of the Allies.

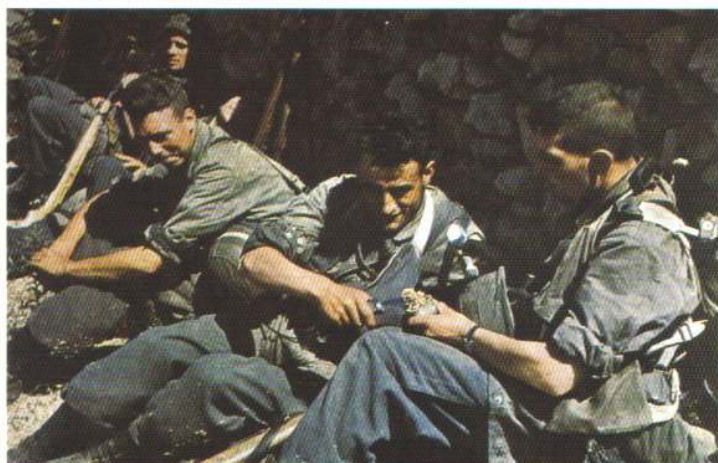
Three days later, Hitler ordered the execution of all Italian officers captured on Kos. The commanding officer was Colonel Felice Leggio. He, and 101 of his officers, were marched to a salt pan just east of the town of Kos and there they were shot in groups of ten. Buried in mass graves. the bodies were exhumed by the Italian authorities after the war and transported back to Italy for burial in the Military Cemetery at Bari.





Above: British forces on the islands, with the support of the defecting Italian garrisons, were numerically superior to the German attackers. However the defenders were deficient in equipment. They had not been landed with their own heavy weaponry. Their intelligence was also poor and they could not predict when and where the Germans would attack

Below: Five hundred Fallschirmjäger were flown from Italy to Athens where they were joined by a company of the elite Brandenburg special forces unit. On 12 November they were committed to the attack on Leros, in the course of which they incurred heavy casualties.



Below: British Commando units – the SBS and the Special Raiding Squadron – were sometimes carried in local craft which had to be camouflaged with nets upon docking. Here men of the SBS unload stores on the German occupied Santorini island, north of Crete.



forces followed the British into the hills. After a dramatic drawn-out battle, the last seven British surrendered and Kos after barely two days of fighting, was in German hands. Nine hundred Allied troops and 3,000 Italians surrendered. Even though many Italians had taken no part in the fighting on either side, 90 officers were executed by the SS.

NAVAL AMBUSH

There was now a pause in the fighting. Allied planners realised that though it made strategic sense to evacuate Leros, the cost in shipping and aircraft might be very high. On 6 October, as the Germans regrouped for the attack, a troop carrying convoy was intercepted by the Royal Navy – probably on the basis of Ultra decrypts. Four hundred men and a battalion's worth of equipment were lost.

The garrison on Leros, commanded by the recently promoted Major-General F. Brittorous, would have to hang on and hope for the best if attacked. Brittorous disposed his forces in an attempt to cover all the possible beaches that could be used for landings. He discounted the possibility of an airborne assault, despite the misgivings of Lt Col Maurice French, commanding a Royal Irish Fusilier battalion.

D-DAY ON LEROS

The anticipated attack came at 0430 hours on 12 November, with a convoy making for Palma, Grifo and Pendelli Bays. Italian coastal batteries, British 25-pdrs and 40-mm Bofors guns opened fire and six German landing craft were sunk. In the north at Palma the Germans were thrown back by a counter attack. However at Grifo Bay two companies landed and moved rapidly inland. They seized the rugged heights of Mount Clidi, destroyed the Italian coastal battery near its summit and dug in. Subsequent British counter attacks failed to dislodge them.

During the afternoon of 12 November, waves of Ju 52

transports flew in and dropped 500 reinforcements on the narrow neck of land between Gurna and Alinda Bays. A combination of strong winds and accurate fire from SBS and other Special Forces detachments, the Fusiliers a detachment from the Royal West Kent regiment inflicted 60 per cent casualties, but under cover of Luftwaffe strikes the survivors dug in. They had effectively split the island by seizing the strategically vital Rachi Ridge.

END OF THE ROAD

The Germans and British fought a succession of actions to capture or recapture dominant features on the island. In the second major counter attack by the British on 15 November the Germans holding the Appetici feature and Rachi Ridge were seriously pressed, and General Müller considered evacuating the island. However the British attack was ill co-ordinated and weak. With daylight Luftwaffe ground support aircraft saved the day for the Germans, flying between 400 and 500 sorties. In this action the gallant Colonel French was killed leading his battalion.

At 1730 hours on 16 November, with the Germans now controlling key areas of the island, the British garrison commander formally surrendered. The Italians, whom the Germans now called 'guerrilla partisans', surrendered an hour later.

ALLIED LOSSES

To avoid further losses the British evacuated Syros and then Samos during the night of 19-20 November.

British and Greek naval losses were six destroyers, two submarines and ten coastal craft sunk; the RAF lost 115 aircraft; and army casualties amounted to 4,800, most of whom were captured.

German losses were 12 merchant ships and 20 landing craft sun and 4,000 personnel casualties, of whom the bulk were drowned.

HITLER'S BATTLES 21



The aircraft of Luftwaffenkommando Süd Ost took advantage of the low Allied priority given to the Eastern Mediterranean theatre. There, operations to secure the Reich's flank were a model of efficient and resolute action by a small compact force against an undetermined enemy.



Left: Churchill had a long obsession with the Eastern Mediterranean dating from his ill-conceived adventure at Gallipoli in WWI. Now in late 1943 his plans were to be frustrated again. With the build up to the invasion of France, there was barely enough equipment for the drive up Italy, let alone adventures in the far-flung Aegean.

Below left: British exploitation of the capitulation by the Italian garrisons on the Greek islands was inefficient and piecemeal. The failure to secure Rhodes with its two airfields rendered the capture of Samos, Leros and Kos irrelevant. The inevitable outcome was surrender or evacuation.

Below: The German forces on the Islands had the advantage of familiarity with the terrain, and the support of many of the local inhabitants. To the Greeks one oppressor was much the same as another.

For the Germans, victory in the Dodecanese was a major propaganda coup. With the exception of Arnhem in 1944 it would be the last time they took British prisoners in any numbers. More importantly, Turkey had been shown who was still master in the Aegean. She refused to join the Allies and remained neutral until the war's end.





A 2cm Flakvierling 38 SdKfz 7/1 anti-aircraft half-track prepares for action. When firing, the sides of the vehicle were folded down to provide a working platform around the gun. Later versions were fitted with an armoured cab, but the gun crew were never provided with similar protection.



HALF-TRACKS

Blitzkrieg was a new type of warfare based around the mobility and firepower of the *panzer*. But tanks alone are vulnerable to enemy infantry action, so covering troops had to be brought forward at the same speed as the armour. The Germans developed the highly mobile, armoured half-track as a solution to the problem.

MILITARY terminology often takes time to catch up with the changing nature of war. By the end of the 20th century, the infantrymen of most western armies were foot soldiers only in name: they rode to war in armoured personnel carriers (APCs) often fitted with turret-mounted cannon, machine guns and even anti-tank missiles. Various terms have been coined, 'armoured infantry', 'armoured cavalry' or 'mechanised infantry'. The vehicles themselves are now split between lightly armed APCs and MICVs (Mechanised Infantry Combat Vehicles) which

are quite capable of fighting it out with older types of tank.

In battle, the infantry would dismount to fight on foot according to circumstances. The British army, reluctant to regard its vehicles as anything more than transports, tended to operate out of the vehicle most of the time. The soldiers of Soviet-trained armies were reluctant to get out at all – something that cost the Arab forces dearly in their 1973 war with Israel.

MOBILE WARRIORS

The driving force behind the transition from foot soldiers to mechanised warriors was the German army of World War II,



whose own terminology combined the old and new in memorable style. The infantry units of the tank divisions were christened *panzergrenadiers*. Their half-tracked vehicles were the most distinctive of the war.

CONCENTRATED POWER

While the British and French persisted in regarding the tank as primarily an infantry support weapon, to be distributed in small units among the infantry divisions, the German army followed the Soviet lead. The *Reichswehr's* secret training programme on the Red Army tank grounds paid enormous dividends. German tanks were to be concentrated in discrete armoured divisions, with accompanying infantry, artillery, anti-tank, anti-aircraft and even re-supply columns all mounted in vehicles, with as high a proportion as possible capable of off-road movement.

Half-track vehicles were already in service as artillery tractors. Their cross country capability was not as great as a fully tracked vehicle, but they were cheaper and quicker to manufacture, being essentially trucks with the rear wheels replaced by a track unit. It was a short step to consider them as infantry transports for the *panzer grenadier* regiments.

HANOMAGS

The idea was to fit a lightly armoured shell to a half-track chassis. Development began in 1937; Hanomag undertook the design of the chassis while Büssing-NAG produced the armoured body. The vehicle used as a basis for the design was the three-ton prime mover, the Sd Kfz 11. Designated the Sd Kfz 251, Allied sources later referred to as the Hanomag; the German army's term for such vehicles was *Schützenpanzerwagen*, abbreviated to SPW. Series production commenced in June 1939 and continued until September 1943.

The basic infantry carrier was fitted with a 7.92 mm machine

The SdKfz 251 was developed as an offshoot of the German half-tracked artillery tractor. It acted as an armoured personnel carrier for infantry accompanying the newly formed panzer divisions. It could carry up to 12 soldiers, and was armed with two MG34 machine guns.





HANOMAGS IN ACTION

ALTHOUGH GERMAN INDUSTRY produced some 15,000 SdKfz 251s or Hanomags for the armed forces, this figure fell way below the number needed to fully equip her nominally motorised units.

Throughout the war the German Army suffered from so chronic a shortage of equipment that when Hanomags went into action its logistics requirements met by a quartermaster's nightmare of captured French or Soviet vehicles. Although nominally designed to carry 12 troops, it rarely did. In the real world, there was barely room in the troop compartment for eight infantrymen in full combat gear.

The role of the Hanomag companies evolved rapidly during the war. In the early Blitzkrieg years the Grenadiers often operated on their own. With the Panzer units punching through enemy defences and into their rear areas, the Grenadiers had to cover the dangerously exposed flanks of the tank units against counter-attack. This would involve dismounting from their vehicles to adopt defensive positions, only later to re-embark once the enemy had been neutralised.

From 1942, with the advent of more heavily fortified positions, tactics were reversed. Tanks were increasingly vulnerable to fortified anti-tank positions, and so worked in close cooperation with the *panzergrenadier* units. It was now the infantry's task to scout forward of the tanks to disperse enemy tank-killing squads, watch out for minefields and generally be the eyes of the nearly blind tankers.

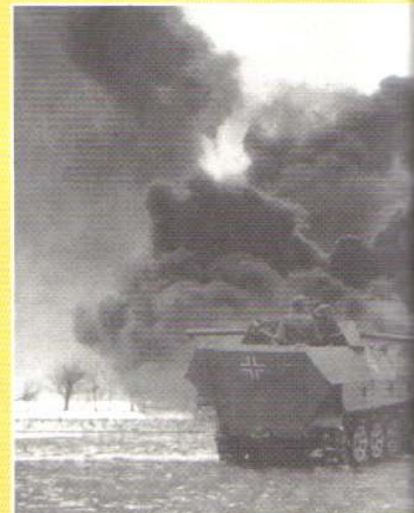
By 1945 the roles had changed again; desperate times evoked drastic responses and Hanomags were fitted with heavy artillery pieces to act as tank hunters.

Below: Pictured here with BMW motorcycle and sidecar in the foreground and the Panzer V 'Panther' to the rear is the SdKfz 251/7. Produced for use by combat engineers, it carried specialist equipment such as a light assault bridge that was slung along the top of the hull.



Above: Panzergrenadiers armed with MP40 sub-machine guns deploy from the rear of a Hanomag. It was intended that all motorised troops be so equipped, but as in many other areas German production fell short of requirements.

Right: The SdKfz 251/16 mittlere Flammpanzerwagen was introduced in 1943. It stowed 700 litres of fuel, fired from flame-throwers either side of the hull.



HITLER'S WAR MACHINE



Left: The blistering desert heat meant that infantry were not capable follow the Panzer forces on foot. From their initial deployment in North Africa in 1941 Rommel's forces, later designated the Afrika Korps, were composed wholly of mobile units. This facilitated the bold, hit-and-run tactics and sweeping flank manoeuvres favoured by Germany's most celebrated commander. Fully motorised infantry divisions were never to reach other theatres, due to the inability of Germany's hard-pressed factories to satisfy production demands.

Below: A Panzergrenadier unit in East Prussia in March 1945. By this time the German army was fighting increasingly defensive operations on every front. The personnel carrier was up-gunned to provide better infantry support for the individual Kampfgruppe (battle group). The German army had to be more mobile than ever to fill the breaches wherever they occurred in the line.



Left: The most powerful of the weapon carriers was the SdKfz 251/1, known as the 'Stuka zum Fuss' or infantry Stuka. This had a tubular steel frame fitted over the hull, carrying three 28 cm or 32 cm rocket launcher frames on each side. The rockets were mounted and fired from their carrying crates. The weapons were powerful but imprecise, and were used at relatively short ranges against fixed or area targets.

Right: The SdKfz 251 variant armed with the 2 cm Flak 38 never received a formal designation as so few examples were produced. As with most weapons carriers it had sides which folded down when deployed for action, to provide room for the gun and its four-to-six man crew. Produced during 1942 only, the vehicle saw action almost exclusively on the Eastern Front, both as a Flak gun and in the infantry support role.



HITLER'S WAR MACHINE



Above: In spite of its non-sequential designation, the 12-tonne SdKfz 8 was the first half-track to enter service with the Wehrmacht. One of the most important of German artillery tractors, it is seen here on parade, towing modernised 15-cm K16s. Production ceased in 1944.



Above: The eight-tonne SdKfz 7 was most famously paired with the 88mm gun. In its tractor form it had space for up to 12 men and their kit. At its peak in 1942 there were over 3,000 examples in service. Many surviving vehicles were appropriated in 1945, and were used by the Czechs and Allies for several years after the end of the war.

Below: The Wehrmacht's main tank recovery vehicle was the SdKfz 9. Though able to handle vehicles up to the weight of a Panzer IV, the 50 or more tonnes of a Tiger needed two or three tractors working in tandem.



tracks could not be everywhere at once. Ironically, the balance between 'armoured infantry' and tanks that the proponents of the panzer divisions intended was achieved to some extent during the war – because the number of tanks in each formation was often far short of the authorised strength.

'FIRETEAM'

The success of the Sd Kfz 251 in the APC role led the army to demand a similar vehicle for its reconnaissance units in 1939. The troop carrying requirement was reduced to half a squad (*Halbgruppe*), or a 'fireteam' in modern parlance. The basis for the new vehicle was the Sd Kfz 10 1-ton prime mover; Büssing-NAG were responsible for the armoured body while Demag built the chassis. Hitler's 'stop-start' approach to industrial management imposed delays on all military production in 1940 so it was not until the summer of 1941 that the first of these new APCs appeared. Designated Sd Kfz 250, some 4,250 were built before manufacture ceased in October 1943. They were the mainstay of the panzer divisions' reconnaissance units and appeared in almost as many variants as the Sd Kfz 251; ammunition carriers, command vehicles, fire support vehicles and mortar carriers were all built.

Dissatisfaction with the Sd Kfz 222 four-wheeled armoured car's performance in Russia led to the experimental fitting of the 222's 20 mm gun turret to a number of Sd Kfz 250s in March 1942. This hybrid proved very successful and the Sd Kfz 250/9 entered mass production to replace the Sd Kfz 222.

18-TON MONSTER

The German army's range of half-track artillery tractors ranged from 1-ton vehicles towing light anti-tank or anti-aircraft guns to 18-ton monsters designed to pull the heaviest guns or to serve as recovery vehicles. Even these were overloaded by the heavy tanks

gun behind a small armoured shield at the front. A second machine gun was located at the rear, on a high-angle mounting. The two-man crew remained in the vehicle, but the infantry section in the open troop compartment deployed via twin rear doors. The second most numerous sub-class looked almost identical, being the ammunition carriers for the tank and artillery units as well as the machine gun and mortar companies of the *panzergrenadier* battalions. There were numerous other variants, some developed in 1939-40, others right at the end of the war on Hitler's personal orders.

There was only one problem with the Sd Kfz 251: there were never enough of them. The numbers built fell far short of the quantity needed to equip every *panzergrenadier* unit. In general, only one of the four or six *panzergrenadier* battalions in a panzer division would be mounted in half-tracks; the bulk of the troops remained in lorries. This severely reduced the ability of the *panzergrenadiers* to fight in conjunction with the tanks. Their unarmoured trucks were vulnerable to enemy fire and had only limited cross-country mobility. The battalion in half-



Above: Fast, reliable and robust, the SdKfz 250 leichter Schützenpanzerwagen was very popular and remained in production until the end of the war. The variant depicted is the command and communication model as used by Erwin Rommel.

Right: In spite of the efforts of Goebbels' propaganda departments and most Hollywood war films, German divisions were by no means totally mobilised. Leg-work and natural horse-power continued to predominate over the combustion engine.

introduced from 1942: it took two or three Sd Kfz 9s to tow a Tiger tank out of mud!

One of the most successful half-tracks was never designed as such. The Opel Maultier was simply the standard Opel army truck with Horstmann tracked suspension in place of the rear wheels. Over 4,000 were made, primarily for service on the Russian front.

Hitler's devotion to minutiae led him to interfere in the procurement programmes of all three armed services, but most particularly with the army. The Russian winter was a ghastly experience for the men, but inflicted serious attrition on the army's unwieldy and inefficient motor transport. Hundreds of different models of vehicle, culled from all over Europe created a spares nightmare.

In May 1942 Hitler decreed that a new, 'no frills' series of half-tracks be built to replace the existing 3- and 5-ton tractors. The *Schwere Wehrmacht-schlepper* (sWS) was entrusted to

Büssing-NAG and prototypes were ready by early 1943. Orders were placed for over 7,000 but no more than 150 were built in 1943 and fewer than a thousand were completed by the end of the war. The sWS served in many roles, from self-propelled anti-aircraft guns to *Panzerwerfer* (where it supplemented the version based on the Maultier). A modified version continued in production at the Tatra works in Czechoslovakia after the war.

MOBILE FLAK

Perhaps the most unusual (and certainly the hardest to pronounce) of all wartime half-tracks was the *Feuerleit-panzerfahrzeug für V-2 Raketen auf Zugkraftwagen 8t*.

The *Zugkraftwagen 8t* was a conventional half-track built as a self-propelled flak unit, with either the 20 mm *Flakvierling* (quadruple) mounting or a single 37 mm Flak 36. Introduced in 1943 it was also used – in very limited numbers – to carry the 50 mm Flak 41. The V2 ballistic missile was designed to be fired



HITLER'S WAR MACHINE



Above: From late 1942 Panzer formations were equipped with their own dedicated rocket artillery units. The soft-top Maultier truck was made available and was refitted with a full suit of armour. The unit mounted a 10-barrel launcher and was designated the 15-cm Panzerwerfer 42.

Below: Designed for use with airborne units the Kettenkrad was first used in 1941. After Hitler's rejection of the airborne concept, the vehicle's original role became redundant and so it was deployed as a supply vehicle in difficult terrain.



from mobile launching units, thus avoiding the problem of the V1 which had fixed firing ramps exposed to Allied air attack. Fitted with a high, box-like armoured superstructure, the *Feuerleitpanzerfahrzeug für V-2 Raketen auf Zugkraftwagen 8t* was the mobile command post for these rocket units. It could tow the base plate unit from which the actual rocket was fired.

INFINITE VARIETY

German half-tracks, like German tanks, aircraft and even lorries, were manufactured to very high standards and in many versions. This

imposed its own limitations on manufacturing output, especially when compared to the prodigious quantities of simpler American and Russian equipment that they faced on or above the battlefield. One comparison will suffice. The tracks on the US Army's M3 half-track consisted of two steel cables with reinforcing crossbars, moulded into a single unit by vulcanized rubber. They had a wear-life of about 1,500 miles but were easily and cheaply replaced. The tracks on a German half-track consisted of individual steel cross pieces held together in a continuous link by a series of pins, each pin held in place by a pair of needle bearings. The German tracks were better engineered, stronger and longer lasting – but labour intensive, expensive to make and just as easily destroyed in battle.

Below: The only weapons carrying version of the 18-tonne SdKfz 9 prime mover was produced in 1943. It mounted an 88-mm Flak 37, and was used on the Eastern front and in France. This example was equipped with an armoured cabin. The vehicle is depicted in firing mode – the sides of the rear firing platform are folded down as a working platform for the gun crew and the small outrigger arms are deployed for stability.

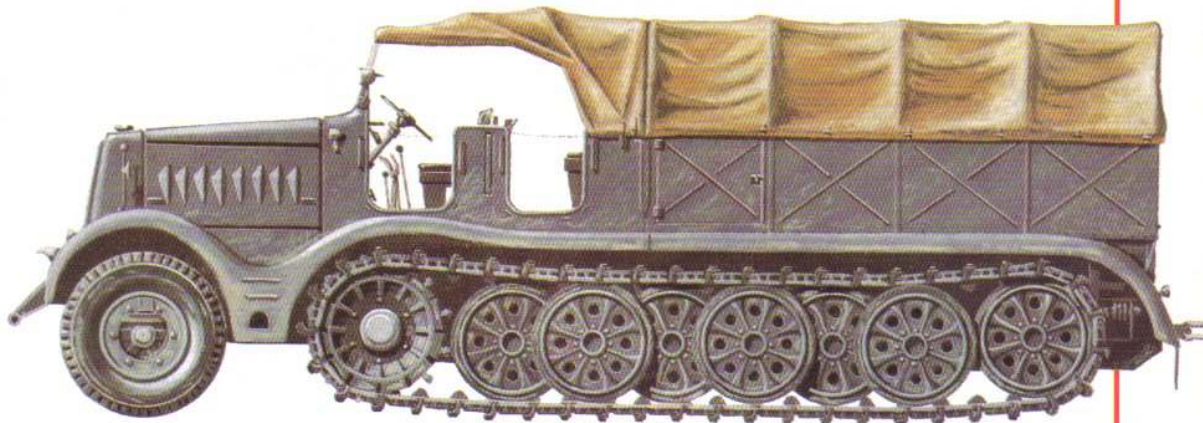




From Goliath to David: German Half-tracks

Right: SdKfz 9

This 18 tonne Leviathan was by far the largest of all WW2 half-tracks. Its origins were in a 1936 requirement for a vehicle to support the panzer divisions and act in a recovery role. Two types were therefore produced. It towed the heaviest German artillery pieces including the massive 24-cm K3. It was made obsolescent as a tank recovery vehicle due to the ever increasing tonnage of the Panzers, and production halted in 1944.



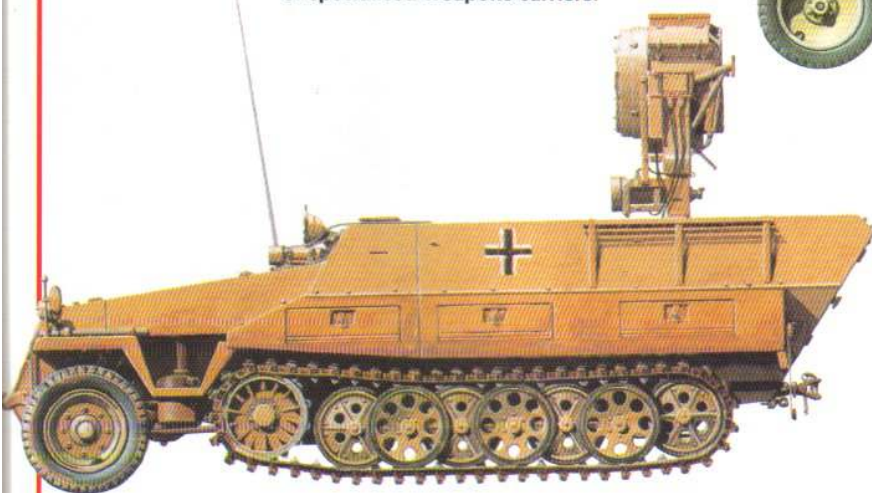
Right: SdKfz 250/10

The vehicle was developed following a mid-1930s requirement for a one tonne half-track to provide mobility for infantry and other units operating with panzer divisions. First seeing action in 1940, production continued until 1944. Later models had redesigned hulls to facilitate manufacture and cut down on the amount of raw materials required. Variants included a communications vehicle and mobile observation post, as well as a number of specialised weapons carriers.



Left: SdKfz 251/20 'Uhu' (Infrarotscheinwerfer)

Another of the seemingly endless variants of the basic 251 model, used to support Panther tanks fitted with infra-red night vision aids. The IR searchlight on a Panther had a range of only 400 metres, but the massive *Beobachtungsgerät* 1251 in the 251/20 could illuminate targets 1500 metres away. The *Uhu* ('Owl') commander controlled five IR-equipped Panthers in a night engagement and was a concept with tremendous potential. However of the 600 ordered in August 1944 no more than 60 are believed to have been completed.



Right: Maultier (Mule)

German trucks proved to be totally unequal to the demands made of them during the winter of the Russian campaign in 1941-42. It was therefore decided to produce a low-cost half-track to take over many of the trucks' duties. This was achieved by simply taking Opel and Daimler-Benz trucks from the production lines and bolting on a tracked assembly composed of Panzer II tracks and running wheels. Many of the latter were available as the light tank was being phased out at that time.



Left: SdKfz 2 kleines Kettenrad

The SdKfz 2 was developed for use by German paratroopers as a light artillery tractor. Entering service in 1941, after airborne units had become almost exclusively ground troops, the *Kettenrads* were used on all fronts as cross-country utility vehicles. They had an impressive road-going speed of 80km/h.



The fiercely-independent Cossacks chafed under the rule of Moscow. Large numbers fought on the German side, under the command of General Andrej Vlassov. Most started out in the Wehrmacht, but in November 1944 the SS took over, with the aim of creating a Cossack Cavalry Corps – two full divisions.



FOREIGN LEGIONS



FEW PEOPLE realise just how international the German forces in World War II were. It is estimated that nearly two million foreign nationals served under the swastika. Many were volunteers, but a large number were more or less willing conscripts. In 1944, a report to *Reichsführer* SS Heinrich Himmler recorded that there were more than 800,000 former Soviet citizens serving with the Wehrmacht and the Waffen-SS, with a further 100,000 in Luftwaffe or Kriegsmarine Uniform. Many of these men were not so much fighting for the Germans as fighting against Stalin, while others chose the German flag as a more attractive alternative to the brutality of a prison camp.

ANTI-COMMUNISTS

There were also hundreds of thousands of volunteers from the west. They too were keen to join the crusade against Bolshevism, but their motivations were somewhat different. Eastern volunteers had direct experience of living under Soviet rule. The young men from countries like Holland, France, Spain and Norway joined the fight out of conviction, right-wing idealists

who wanted to halt the seemingly inexorable advance of Marxism.

Few of the early volunteers stayed beyond their initial two-year contract with the Germans, but those who did continue to fight did so to the end, many giving their lives in the defence of Berlin in 1945.



Above: The maroon red fez, collar patch and arm shield worn by the 13th Waffen-Gebirgs Division Der SS 'Handschar' (Kroatisches Nr 1). The word Handschar is Turkish for scimitar, and the unit symbol included such a sword. Raised in 1943 from Bosnian Muslims for use in anti-partisan operations, the division had a poor record – its Muslim troops mutinied in training, killing several of their German cadre members.

Below: Heinrich Himmler believed that Muslims would make good shock troops, and persisted in his attempts to create an Islamic SS unit. The Osttürkischer Waffenverband der SS was composed of former Soviet Muslims from Turkestan who had come over to the Germans. It was given its own collar patch and unique cuffband, but they were made too late to reach the troops before the end of the war.



NAZI SYMBOLS



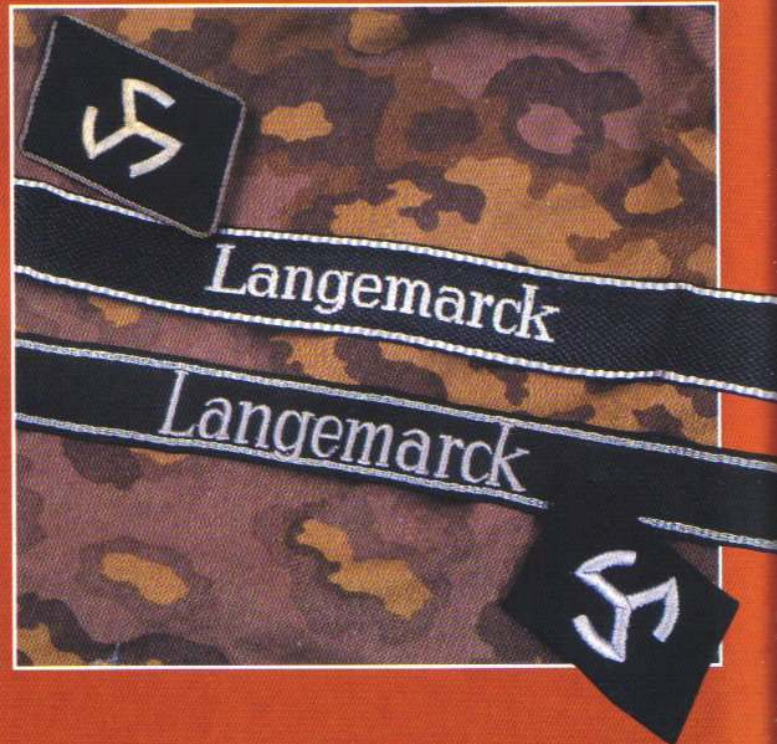
Above: Formed in April 1944 largely from Albanian and Kosovo Muslim volunteers, the 21st Waffen-Gebirgs Division SS Skanderbeg was not a top line unit. Considered to be fit only for security missions, it was hampered by the fact that many of its Muslim troops were more interested in settling scores with Serbs than in fighting for Hitler and the Reich.

Below: Arm and collar patch for SS-Panzer Grenadier Regiment 24 Denmark, part of the 11th SS-Panzer Grenadier Division Nordland. The first Danish unit to carry the national flag as an arm patch was the Freikorps Danmark, formed in 1940 and disbanded after hard service in 1943. Survivors formed the nucleus of the new regiment, which wore a curved swastika as a collar patch.



Above: Early Dutch volunteers served in the Freiwilligen Legion Nederland, formed in 1941. The Legion was disbanded in 1943, and the SS-Freiwilligen Brigade Nederland was established. This was later given Panzer Grenadier division status. The collar patch carried what was known as a 'Wolf's Hook' device, while the arm shield was in the colours of the Dutch national flag.

Below: Volunteers from Flanders originally served in the Freiwilligen Legion Flandern, whose collar patch was the three-legged swastika known as a Trifos. Disbanded in 1943, some members of the unit were assigned to the Das Reich infantry regiment Langemarck, which was combined with a Finnish regiment to form a brigade, later expanded into a division. It was all but wiped out at the end of 1944.





Left: A number of Italian Fascists resolved to continue the war after the Italian surrender in 1943. The Legion Italia fought in Italy, distinguishing itself in the fighting around Anzio. Until that time Himmler refused to allow them to join the SS proper, and the unit insignia had a red background. After Anzio, however, some regiments were accepted into the Waffen SS and were allowed to wear black SS patches. Seen here is a late-war group comprising officers and NCO/other rank collar patches and an armshield. By the end of the war the unit had become the 29th Waffen-Grenadier Division der SS (Italienische Nr. 1).

Below: Although the Germans had established Latvian police units almost as soon as they invaded, it was not until March 1943 that they asked for volunteers for a fighting unit. 32,000 Latvians responded, and the 15th Waffen-Grenadier Division der SS (Lettische Nr.1) was formed. Many of the division's members wore standard SS runes on their collars, but in 1944 a new 'Sun and Stars' pattern was introduced. The division was forced out of Latvia by the advancing Red Army, and surrendered to the British in 1945.

ARMY or SS?

THE BULK of the early volunteers fighting for Hitler served with the German Army. Those from Eastern Europe were initially used in secondary roles, serving in police battalions or as prison camp guards, working as labourers or moving supplies on the long lines of communication. But gradually, as the pressure on German manpower increased, they were used more and more often as combat troops. Some fought extremely well, while others were worthless in battle. Some of the auxiliary units, particularly those employed by the *Einsatzgruppen* and as camp and ghetto guards were among the worst perpetrators of war crimes.

Many western volunteers also served with the army, some in large enough numbers to field divisional-sized formations. However, large numbers also joined the Waffen-SS. Himmler, limited by the army on the number of men he could recruit from the German population, looked to the 'Nordic' countries of occupied Europe to make up the difference. Later, as manpower demands grew apace with Himmler's ambitions, SS racial standards were relaxed and units were formed from Muslims, Slavs, Indians and other asiatics. Some of these units fought well, but most were of poor quality.



A-Z



OF THE THIRD REICH

Renn, Ludwig (1889 - 1979)

A Saxon aristocrat, Renn was born Arnold Vieth von Golsenau in Dresden on 22 April 1889. In World War I he served as a company and battalion commander, and joined the *Freikorps* in 1919. In the early 20s he studied the humanities, Russian and law at Göttingen and Munich universities. Changing his name to Renn he joined the German Communist

Party in 1928, the same year that his novel *Der Krieg* was published. He visited the USSR and edited left wing periodicals during the Weimar period. Arrested by the Nazis after the Reichstag Fire of February 1933, he was sentenced to two and a half years in prison. He fled to Switzerland in 1936 and made his way to Spain where he served as the Chief of Staff of the 11th

International Brigade. Arrested in France in 1940 he escaped to Britain, the USA and settled in Mexico where he lived until 1947. He returned to East Germany in 1947 and taught anthropology at Dresden University. He died in Berlin on 21 July 1979.

Right: One of the leading left-wing writers in Weimar Germany, Ludwig Renn was exiled after the Nazi seizure of power.



Rheinlandbesetzung - Rhineland Reoccupation

The Reoccupation of the Rhineland was Hitler's first foreign policy coup. The Rhineland was a 60 km strip of territory west of the River Rhine, which included the cities of Cologne, Düsseldorf and Bonn. It had been demilitarised since 1918 as part of the Treaty of Versailles, a situation ratified by the Locarno Pact. On 7 March 1936 in an operation code named 'Winter Exercise' Hitler ordered about one division of German troops to enter the territory. The Führer asserted that a Franco-Soviet Pact had broken the Treaty of Locarno and this justified his breach of the Treaty of Versailles. He offered as a sop for the breach of the Treaty of Versailles a 25-year non-aggression pact to France, Belgium and the

Netherlands, to be guaranteed by Britain and Italy.

Many of Hitler's senior military advisors urged him not to enter the Rhineland, since they knew that the *Wehrmacht* would not survive a concerted attack by the British, Belgians and French. But the dictator gambled on the pacifist sentiments in France and Britain, and the success of his gamble convinced the Führer that it was worth pushing the West for further concessions.

Right: German troops march into the demilitarised Rhineland. The Operation was a colossal bluff on Hitler's part - the *Wehrmacht* did not have the strength to oppose the French or the British should either have objected.



Ribbentrop, Joachim 'von' (1893 - 1946)

Born in Wesel on 30 April 1893 and executed at Nuremberg in 1946, Joachim Ribbentrop was educated at Kassel and Metz. A poor scholar, he worked as a bank clerk and a casual labourer in Canada and the United States. During World War I he served on the Eastern Front and from 1915 was attached to the German military mission in Turkey. After the war he worked as a wine salesman and married the daughter of a wealthy champagne producer. He used adoption by a titled aunt in 1925 to acquire the prefix 'von' in front of his name.

Encouraged by his wife, Ribbentrop joined the NSDAP on 1 May 1932 and became a *Standartenführer* in the SS. As Hitler's foreign policy advisor Ribbentrop enjoyed some

diplomatic successes, notably the Anglo-German Naval Agreement in June 1935 and the German-Soviet Nonaggression Pact of 23 August 1939. However his period as German ambassador in London from August 1936 to January 1938 was a disaster, marked by German arrogance and British hostility. At a court reception in 1937 he greeted the British King George with a Nazi salute - which did not endear him to British society. Nicknamed 'von Brickendrop' by the British press, his experiences in London turned him from an Anglophile into an Anglophobe.

With the onset of war he placed the resources of the Foreign Ministry at the disposal of the SS in the Final Solution programme. Ribbentrop was not popular with many senior Nazis -

Goebbels said of him "von Ribbentrop bought his name, he married his money, and he swindled his way into office."

At the end of the war Ribbentrop attempted to evade capture, but was arrested by the British on 14 June 1945. At Nuremberg he was found guilty on all four war crimes counts, and at 01.11 on 16 October 1946 he was hanged - the first of the condemned Nazis to mount the scaffold.

Right: Described by William L. Shirer as "a man of monumental denseness," Ribbentrop made no better impression on his allies. "You only have to look at him," said Mussolini, "to see how little brain there is in his head."

**See also Hitler's Henchmen
Issue 9: Ribbentrop**



Richthofen, Wolfram Freiherr von (1895 - 1945)

A cousin of the World War I fighter ace Manfred von Richthofen, Wolfram von Richthofen was a junior member of the Red Baron's 'Flying Circus.' After the war he studied engineering, but returned to the Army in 1923. In 1936 he served as Chief of Staff to General Hugo Sperrle and Generalmajor Helmuth Volkmann, the commanders of the Condor Legion in Spain. Promoted *Oberst* in 1938, von Richthofen was the final commander of the Condor Legion. In the campaign in

Poland, Ju 87 Stuka dive-bombers under von Richthofen's command demonstrated their effectiveness in ground attack operations. In France von Richthofen commanded *Fliegerkorps VIII*, three wings of Stukas and reconnaissance aircraft that became the army's 'flying artillery,' providing very efficient close support for the Wehrmacht's panzer spearheads. During the Battle of Britain the *Fliegerkorps*, headquartered at Deauville, suffered heavy casualties. However the Stukas

came into their own again in the Balkans and the USSR. In June 1942 von Richthofen became commander in Chief of *Luftlotte IV* in the East and a year later as a Field Marshal took command of *Luftlotte II* in Italy. A brain tumour ended his military career in October 1944 and he died at Lüneburg on 12 July 1945.

Right: Although trained as a fighter pilot, Wolfram von Richthofen made his name as the commander of ground attack units – which was the pre-war Luftwaffe's primary tactical role.



Riefenstahl, Leni (1902 -)

Born on 22 August 1902 in Berlin, Leni Riefenstahl made her name as an actress in the 1920s in a series of 'mountain' films. The mystical film *Das blaue Licht* – The Blue Light – made in 1932 brought her to Hitler's attention, and he entrusted her with producing propaganda films for the NSDAP.

She filmed the 1933 *Parteilage* as *Sieg des Glaubens* – Victory of Faith. A competent piece of work, the film was important as a dress rehearsal for her next film.

The 1934 Nuremberg Rally was the subject of Riefenstahl's film *Triumph des Willens* or *Triumph of the Will*, one of the most powerful propaganda movies ever made which added immeasurably to the Hitler myth.

Riefenstahl followed *Triumph*

des Willens with *Fest der Schönheit* – Festival of Beauty, a film covering the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games. It celebrated the human form and depicted Germany under Hitler as a stable, confident community.

During the war years Riefenstahl worked on only one major film. Obstructed by Goebbels, who was possibly piqued at her rejection of his advances, *Tiefland* or 'Lowlands' would not be completed until the middle of the 1950s.

Although an undoubted genius, Riefenstahl's work will always be tainted by her glorification of Hitler and the Nazis. Nor was she totally free of guilt herself – in *Tiefland* she used Roma from a concentration camp as extras. These unpaid actors and

actresses would later die in the gas chambers.

After the war Riefenstahl made a new reputation for herself as still photographer. At the request of a British newspaper she covered the Munich Olympics as a photographer, and her 1973 book *Die Nuba von Kau* – The Nuba of Kau – was a success. She became a qualified underwater camerawoman in her eighties, and has continued to work well into her nineties.

Right: A reasonably talented actress who became a film maker of genius, Leni Riefenstahl will always be remembered for her propaganda films which glorified Hitler and Nazi Germany.

See also Secret Hitler Files

Issue 8: Hitler's Women



Ritterkreuz

Instituted by Hitler at the beginning of World War II, the *Ritterkreuz* or Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross was intended to bridge the gap between the Iron Cross 1st Class and the *Grosskreuz* or Grand Cross. It came in five classes which were in ascending order of precedence the *Ritterkreuz* (7,200 awarded); *Ritterkreuz mit Eichenlaub* or Knight's Cross with Oak Leaves (853 recipients); *Ritterkreuz mit*

Eichenlaub and *Schwerten* or Knight's Cross with Oak Leaves and Swords (150 recipients); *Ritterkreuz mit Eichenlaub, Schwerten und Brillanten* or Knight's Cross with Oak Leaves, Swords and Diamonds (27 recipients); and *Ritterkreuz mit goldenen Eichenlaub, Schwerten und Brillanten* or Knight's Cross with Golden Oak Leaves, Swords and Diamonds. The only recipient of the Golden Oakleaves was

Stuka pilot Hans-Ulrich Rudel, while Herman Goering contrived to be the sole wearer of the Grand Cross of the Iron Cross, which he was given after the defeat of France in May 1940.

Right: The Knight's Cross was worn at the throat. The Germans were almost unique in that soldiers who had received such awards for gallantry wore the actual medals on their field uniforms and even in combat.



Röhm, Ernst (1887 - 1934)

Ernst Röhm was born in Munich to an old family of Bavarian civil servants. A short, fat homosexual with a scarred red face, Röhm joined the Army just before August 1914. During World War I he was decorated with the Iron Cross and received the Wound Badge. After the war Röhm remained in the Army, though he

also joined Franz Xaver Ritter von Epp's *Freikorps* which crushed the revolutionary government in Munich in 1919. By now a Captain in the *Reichswehr*, Röhm recruited one Corporal Adolf Hitler to infiltrate the 'German Workers' Party'. Röhm and Hitler became close friends, using the affectionate *du* for 'you' rather

than the formal *sie*.

Röhm spent time in Bolivia in the late 1920s, but following the Nazi election successes in 1930 Hitler asked him to return to re-organise and train the *Sturm Abteilung* (SA). A gifted organiser, Röhm used the structure of the German Army as his model and in a very short

time succeeded in revitalising the party's paramilitary wing. In three months SA strength had grown to 170,000, and within three years Röhm had more than two million men in brown shirts.

Röhm favoured a radical change to German society, seeing the SA as the replacement for the *Reichswehr*. (Continued over.)

A-Z OF THE THIRD REICH

He set up a general staff, headquarters and training college in Munich and began to agitate for more power within the movement. His ultimate aim was to use the Storm Troopers to replace the regular army.

But Hitler was not happy with a rival powerbase within the party. Moreover, he needed the support of the Army. In June 1934 he decided to deal with both problems, when the SS was unleashed against Röhm and the

senior leadership of the SA in the Night of the Long Knives.

Röhm was arrested and taken to Stadelheim prison in Munich. On Sunday 1 July Hitler ordered Röhm's death. He was given a pistol and five minutes to "take the honourable course." When the former SA leader refused to commit suicide, a squad of SS men led by Theodore Eicke entered Röhm's cell. Acting on orders from Sepp Dietrich, they shot Ernst Röhm dead.

Right: Far from the Aryan ideal espoused by Hitler and his followers, Ernst Röhm was a fat, boozy homosexual. But he was also a man with considerable organisational gifts, whose influence on the early development of the Nazi Party was immense.

See also Inside the Third Reich

Issue 16: Hitler's rivals

See also Hitler's Henchmen

Issue 8: Röhm



Rommel, Erwin Johannes Eugen (1891 - 1944)

The 'Desert Fox' was born at Heidenheim near Ulm on 15 November 1891. A career soldier, he served with distinction in World War I winning the *Pour le Mérite* in Italy in 1917. On the basis of his experience in World War I he published *Infanterie Greift an* - Infantry Attack - and this drew him to Hitler's attention. In Poland in 1939 Rommel commanded Hitler's personal bodyguard battalion. In France in 1940 he commanded the 7th Panzer Division which won the nickname *Gespensterdivision* or 'Ghost Division' because of its rapid advance.

Rommel commanded the *Deutsches Afrika Korps* (DAK) in North Africa from 6 February 1941 to 9 March 1943 during

which time he outfought the British and Imperial forces on numerous occasions. After a brief period in Italy, he took command of an Army Group in Northern France in January 1944 where he worked tirelessly to prepare the defences of the Atlantic Wall.

Following the Allied landings in Normandy he joined with Field Marshal von Rundstedt in urging Hitler to make peace. On 17 July Rommel was badly wounded by Allied fighters, and was convalescing in Germany at the time of the July Plot.

Though not a conspirator, Rommel was disenchanted with Hitler and the plotters had considered him as a potential Chief of State. Under torture a conspirator blurted out the name

and Hitler sent Generals Burgdorf and Meisel to Rommel's home. They offered him the choice of suicide or a public trial which would involve his wife and son. He chose suicide and died on 14 October 1944. He was buried with full military honours.

Right: One of history's great field commanders, Erwin Rommel was less effective as a commander in chief. A fervent supporter of Hitler before the war, Rommel became disillusioned as the growing power of the Allies made it clear that Germany was going to lose.

See also Hitler's Henchmen

Issue 7: Rommel

See also Hitler's Battles

Issue 8: North Africa 1



Rosenberg, Alfred (1893 - 1946)

The leading proponent of Nazi race theories Alfred Rosenberg was born in Reval (Tallinn) Estonia on 12 January 1893, the son of an Estonian mother and Lithuanian father. He studied architecture in Moscow, and may have served in the Russian army during World War I.

He moved to Germany in 1918, joining the German Worker's Party soon after Hitler, and was at his side during the Beer Hall Putsch. Rosenberg was editor of the *Völkischer Beobachter*, and became known for his anti-Semitic writings. *Mythus des XX Jahrhunderts* or 'The Myth of the 20th Century' was a book that

gave a 'scientific' justification of the Nazi concept of blood and race.

In 1929 he set up the Combat League of Struggle for German Culture. Its purpose was to promote the beliefs of Hitler on the nature of German *Kultur* and to combat the Jewish influence on German cultural life.

Rosenberg was detested by virtually all senior Nazis, and after he was made Reich Minister for Occupied Eastern Territories he clashed with most of them.

Many of the worst atrocities in the East were committed during his time in office, and as a result he was found guilty on all four

War Crimes charges at Nuremberg. On 16 October he mounted the scaffold, looked at the chaplain, said nothing and in 90 seconds was dead. It was the swiftest execution at Nuremberg.

Right: Born of German-speaking parents in what were then the Baltic provinces of Imperial Russia, Alfred Rosenberg was one of the earliest members of the Nazi Party and took part in the Beer Hall Putsch. Although one of the men who defined the anti-Semitic nature of National Socialism, he was disliked by his fellows.

See also Hitler's War Machine

Issue 20: Rosenberg



Rossbach, Gerhard (1893 - 1967)

Born in Kehlberg, Pomerania Gerhard Rossbach was a career soldier who after service in World War I became a *Freikorps* leader. The Rossbach Group fought in West Prussia and the Baltic area and took part in the Kapp Putsch. When ordered to disband his group, he kept his men together in small 'teams.' They were

reactivated to suppress unrest in Silesia, operating as the 'Silesia Volunteer Division.' Remnants of the 'Division' took part in the Munich Putsch of November 1923 and following its failure Rossbach escaped to Austria from where he was amnestied.

Rossbach was the man who located a stock of unused

ex-World War I East African campaign brown cloth, which made into brown shirts would form the basis of the SA uniform.

Rossbach was a homosexual who was active in youth movements from 1926 to 1933. In 1933 he became a training inspector for the newly founded Reich Air Defence League. As an

associate of Röhm and Heines he was temporarily jailed after the Night of the Long Knives. On his release he left politics, building a civilian career as an insurance salesman. After the war Rossbach was successful in promoting the reinstitution of the Bayreuth Festival. He died in Hamburg on 30 August 1967.

Rote Kapelle (Red Orchestra)

The nickname given by the *Abwehr* to the largest spy and resistance organisation within Germany and Occupied Europe. The driving force was Leopold Trepper, a Polish Jew working for the Soviet Union. Based in Belgium, he made contact with dissident Germans including Harro Schulze-Boysen, grandson of Admiral von Tirpitz and Arvid Harnack, nephew of a celebrated theologian, and his American wife Mildred.

The *Rote Kapelle* was set up in 1938. It was not used between

1939 and 1941, but was reactivated following the German invasion of the USSR. By 1942 it had some 100 radio transmitters forwarding information to the USSR, including details of the Tiger tank.

In August 1942 the *Abwehr* made 46 arrests, capturing radio equipment and operators. The radios were then operated by the SD sending false information. The members of the *Rote Kapelle* were interrogated brutally and all the men were hanged at Plötzensee while Mildred Harnack

and the other women were guillotined. Trepper was arrested in France, but after interrogation managed to escape. Following the Liberation he was flown to Moscow – where he was accused of collaborating with his German captors and gaoled! After ten years in prison he was released following Stalin's death, and emigrated to Israel.

Right: Aristocratic Harro Schulze-Boysen and his wife Libertas were key members of the Rote Kapelle network. Arrested in 1942, both were executed at Plötzensee.



Rotfrontkämpferbund

The Red Front Fighters' League or RFB was the paramilitary organisation created by the KPD, the German Communist Party, in May 1924. Its membership grew from 15,000 in 1925 to over 100,000 in 1928. Ernst Thälmann, chairman of the RFB from 1925, also formed other organisations including the Red Youth Storm, the Red Navy and the Red League of Women and Girls.

As NSDAP power grew through the early 1930s, the RFB clashed more and more often with its

Nazi counterpart, the SA. Street battles and brawls at political rallies became the norm. Both sides suffered injury and the deaths, like that of Horst Wessel, produced political martyrs. Some members of the RFB had been trained by instructors from Moscow and adopted the slogan "Strike the fascists wherever you find them!"

On 1 February 1933, directly after Hitler's assumption of power the Hamburg *Rotfrontkämpferbund* issued a call to arms.

"The day is not far distant when our victorious Red Army that needs no police to protect it, weapon in hand, will drive the deadly enemy of the working class to the devil." After the Enabling Act of 24 March 1933 the KPD and RFB were declared illegal.

Right: Ernst Thälmann, chairman of the Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands, was also head of the RFB. The Communist paramilitary organisation slavishly followed Moscow's orders.



Ruble Plan

An attempt to rescue German Jews proposed at the 1938 meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee for Political Refugees. Held in France under the chairmanship of the American George Rublee, it was proposed that emigration of Jews from Germany be linked with the promotion of German exports

in such a way that Jews could transfer their ledger credits abroad.

Herman Goering and Joachim von Ribbentrop took a lively interest in the proposal. In January 1939, after sounding out Hitler, President of the *Reichsbank* Hjalmar Schacht met Rublee to discuss the emigration

of 150,000 Jewish males whose age (between 15 and 45) and health would make it possible for them to find work abroad. The plan called for emigration over three to five years, and when dependants were included would mean that 450,000 Jews would leave Germany.

The Jews would have to place

a quarter of their assets in a cash fund, to be used for their support before they emigrated. This fund would then become the property of the Reich after they left.

Two weeks later Schacht was dismissed by Hitler following a row over financing re-armament. Within a few days Rublee had resigned and the plan collapsed.

Rudel, Hans-Ulrich (1916 - 1982)

Hans-Ulrich Rudel was born at Konradswaldau (Silesia) on 2 July 1916 and educated at the military school at Wildpark. In 1937 he entered the Luftwaffe becoming a reconnaissance observer before training as a pilot. He was posted to *Stukageschwader 2*, seeing combat for the first time during the invasion of Russia in June 1941. In September he and his wingmen damaged the old battleship *Oktyabrskaya Revolutsia* at Kronstadt before sinking the battleship *Marat* in Leningrad harbour.

Rudel was shot down 32 times in more than 2,500 combat missions. Most of his flights were in the Ju 87 Stuka, but he also

flew 400 missions in the Focke-Wulf FW 190.

Rudel's confirmed kills included more than 518 tanks, 700 trucks, over 150 anti-aircraft and artillery positions, nine fighter or ground attack aircraft and hundreds of bridges, bunkers and railway lines. He was also credited with 11 kills in aerial combat.

He was the most highly decorated member of the German armed forces, receiving the unique award of the *Ritterkreuz mit goldenen Eichenlaub, Schweren und Brillanten* (Knights Cross with Golden Oakleaves, Swords and Diamonds) on 1 January 1945.

In March 1944 he escaped capture by Soviet troops by

swimming across the 300 metre river Dniester. In the spring of 1945 he was badly wounded and his right leg was partially amputated. Despite this injury he flew into Berlin in the last days of the war.

After the war Rudel worked for a time in Argentina and was associated with far-right and extreme nationalist causes. He died at Rosenheim in 1982 and at his burial West German fighter pilots caused a scandal when they flew in salute over the cemetery.

Right: Rudel celebrates the end of his 1500th mission with a friend. Although a man of true valour, he was also an unrepentant Nazi to the end of his life.



Ruhr valley

The Ruhr is a river in central Germany which runs through the heart of the country's steel and heavy engineering belt. Thanks to a plentiful supply of coal the area grew quickly after the industrial revolution, and by 1914 the cities of Bochum, Dortmund and Essen – headquarters of the Krupp Empire – were the centres of the German armaments industry. Demilitarised after World War I, the Ruhr was occupied by French and Belgian troops in 1923. The Germans used passive resistance

and sabotage to fight the occupiers. One of the leaders was Albert Leo Schlageter, executed by the French for sabotage in May 1923. Though not a Nazi, he later became a Nazi hero. The occupiers eventually left in 1925.

After WWI the arms makers continued operating clandestinely, but following the Nazi seizure of power in 1933 the work came into the open. During World War II the Ruhr was the objective for massive air raids by the RAF and USAAF. In April 1945

the entire Ruhr basin was surrounded by advancing Allied forces; 325,000 German troops and 30 generals were captured.

Right: The Ruhr Valley is flooded as a result of the RAF's famous Dambusters raid. On the face of it a spectacular success, the raid in fact caused only minor disruption to the Ruhr's vital steel, coal and armaments industries.



See also Hitler's Henchmen

Issue 21: Krupp

Rundstedt, Karl Rudolf Gerd von (1875 - 1953)

One of the most experienced and high-ranking officers in the German Army, Gerd von Rundstedt was born in Aschersleben. He served as a General Staff officer in the Great War, fighting in France and Turkey. He rose rapidly in the *Reichswehr*, but was retired as a Colonel General after criticising the action against Czechoslovakia in 1938.

Rundstedt was reinstated in time for the Polish campaign of 1939, where he commanded Army Group South. In 1940 he commanded Army Group A in France and the Low Countries. He was promoted to Field Marshal after the fall of

France on 19 July 1940.

Rundstedt commanded Army Group South as it pushed into the Ukraine during Operation Barbarossa. Hitler sacked him on 12 December 1941 for a tactical withdrawal near Rostov. He was appointed Commander in Chief of Army Group West in France in March 1942, responsible for the preparation against the expected Allied invasion. Hitler sacked him on 2 July 1944 for failing to stop the D-Day landings. Rundstedt was reluctantly brought out of retirement one final time to command the Ardennes Offensive of December 1944.

He knew about the July Bomb Plot but did not participate. After its failure he presided over the Court of Honour that dismissed the conspirators from the Army. After the war von Rundstedt was imprisoned for transmitting the Commando Order of 18 October 1942. He was released on 5 May 1949 because of serious illness and died at Hanover.

Right: An officer of the old school, Field Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt got on reasonably well with Hitler. This might explain why the Führer called 'the old gentleman' back to service after dismissing him in Russia and France.



Russo-German Pact

Non-aggression pact between Germany and Russia, signed by von Ribbentrop and Molotov on 23 August 1939. The pact ensured firstly that neither party would attack the other; secondly should one of them become the object of belligerent action by a third power the other party would in no manner lend its support to this third power. Finally neither Germany nor Russia would join any grouping of Powers aimed at the other party.

A secret protocol identified spheres of interest in Poland and the Baltic; the USSR had claims on Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania with the northern border of Lithuania as a dividing line. In Poland Soviet influence would reach as far as the line of the rivers Narew, Vistula and San. When the Pact became public and the Germans and Russians attacked Poland in 1939 the loyalty of Communists worldwide was severely tested.

Right: Stalin and Molotov confer. The agreement with these two naturally suspicious men might have been Germany's greatest diplomatic coup, but Hitler had every intention of breaking the treaty at the first opportunity – which came in June 1941.



See also Secret Hitler Files

Issue 21: Hitler and the Reds

See also Secret Hitler Files

Issue 25: Hitler and Stalin

Rust, Bernhard (1883 - 1945)

Reich Minister for Science, Education and Culture in Hitler's Cabinet from 1934 to 1945. Rust was born in Hannover. He studied Germanic studies, philosophy, philology, art history and music at several universities including Munich and Göttingen. In 1908 he passed the state exams for secondary teaching. He worked as a senior science master in a *Realgymnasium* or secondary school before World War I.

During the war he fought for four years and was awarded the

Iron Cross First and Second Class and the Hohenzollern Order.

Rust was dismissed from teaching in 1930 'on the grounds of health', though this was a cover for a more serious charge of 'professional misconduct'. It was rumoured that he was really ousted for sexual misdemeanours.

A member of the NSDAP since the early 1920s, he was *Gauleiter* for Hannover-Braunschweig. In 1930 he was elected to the Reichstag. In 1933 when the Nazis

came to power he was appointed the Prussian minister of culture. In 1934 he was made Reich Minister for Science, Education and Culture. For the next 11 years he was in charge of education and culture in Nazi Germany. He committed suicide in May 1945.

Right: Bernhard Rust experienced his share of Nazi party in-fighting. He had continually to fight off encroachments into his arena by Baldur von Schirach, who wanted the education job along with his Reich Youth leadership.



COMING IN THE NEXT VOLUMES OF **HITLER'S** Third Reich

SECRET HITLER FILES

Hitler's World View
Hitler and Stalin



THE HOLOCAUST

Aktion Reinhard
Judenrat



HITLER'S HENCHMEN

Erhard Milch
Albert Kesselring

HITLER'S WAR MACHINE

Light Flak
Infantry support
Junkers Ju 88



INSIDE THE REICH

Corruption
Home Front
Berlin Olympics

NAZI HORRORS

Gross Rosen
Malmedy Massacres
Mauthausen



NAZI SYMBOLS

The Swastika
Sicherheitsdienst



A-TO-Z OF THE THIRD REICH

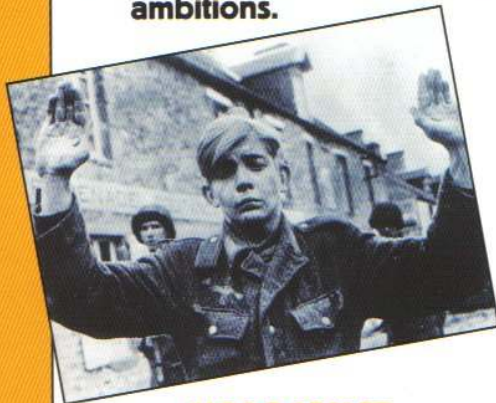
IN THIS VOLUME OF **HITLER'S** **Third Reich**

SECRET HITLER FILES

Hitler hated Marxism even before he became an overt Jew-hater. His loathing dated from his days in Vienna, before WWI.

INSIDE THE THIRD REICH

Hitler told his adoring Youth that the future belonged to them. So a generation of innocents were trained as the storm-troopers who would realise Hitler's insane ambitions.



HOLOCAUST

Named after the assassinated Heydrich, *Aktion Reinhard* was the Nazi plan to kill every Jew in Poland – a plan they all but completed in 21 months.

WAR MACHINE

Hitler's new panzers were vulnerable to Infantry attack. The half-track allowed supporting *Panzergrrenadiers* to keep up with the tanks.



HENCHMEN

The Krupp dynasty – Hitler's armourers. Germany's biggest company was so important to the Third Reich that its owners and board members were singled out for special treatment by the Allies after the end of the war.



HITLER'S BATTLES

The collapse of Italy's Fascist government in July 1943 threatened all of Germany's Mediterranean empire. Hitler would have to move fast in the Aegean to protect his troops in the Balkans.

